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ABSTRACT

This book presents suggestions, organized by categories of educational concerns, that many principals have used to prepare students for the 21st century. Principals of the 1993-94 Blue Ribbon Schools--those schools selected by the U.S. Department of Education as outstanding elementary and middle schools--were asked to share a "best idea" that they and their teachers had put into classroom practice. The foreword was written by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W Riley and the introduction was written by Samuel G. Sava, Executive Director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The book provides suggestions and tips on the following topics: preparing children for school, increasing student achievement, fostering citizenship and character, creating safe and disciplined schools, encouraging lifelong learning, involving parents, marketing your school, creating a community of learning, coordinating effective staff development, making the best use of technology, and even more "best ideas." A list of the 1993-94 Blue Ribbon Elementary and Middle Schools is included. (LMI)

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Best Ideas From America's Blue Ribbon Schools, Volume 2

*What Award-Winning
Elementary and Middle School
Principals Do*



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National Association of
Elementary School Principals

**Best Ideas From
America's Blue Ribbon
Schools, Volume 2**

**A joint publication of
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and
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Best Ideas From America's Blue Ribbon Schools, Volume 2

*What Award-Winning
Elementary and Middle School
Principals Do*

National Association of
Elementary School Principals

NAESP



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Foreword

Our nation's Blue Ribbon Schools provide us with some of the most impressive success stories in education today. With a can-do spirit and a cooperative approach, these schools bring together innovation and incentive, creating places of learning that are at the forefront of our efforts in communities across the nation to reinvigorate education.

Schools like these provide the leadership necessary to create a strong core curriculum and academic achievement; a safe and drug-free climate; an environment that promotes teacher recognition and professional development; and a place where strong parental, family, and community support is encouraged.

They are emblematic of the kind of change we are working to achieve all across America: giving all young people the opportunity to learn to their maximum ability so that they can succeed in the ever-changing international marketplace.

We have made great strides in education reform in just the past 21 months, working in a bipartisan fashion and achieving more in this short time than we have in 3 decades. As President Clinton has said, "America is getting serious about education. America cares about the future of every child."

We passed the very important Goals 2000 Act that tells all of America that we are committed to restoring excellence in education for all of our children. It offers a way for the citizens of our nation, operating within their own communities and states, to shape and improve their schools, help this nation reach its full potential, and create a better future for our young people.

We passed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which will help students who live in disadvantaged areas get the high-quality education they deserve so that they can work to improve themselves and be successful citizens.

We passed the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, which offers our young people the opportunity to learn skills to get good jobs or to continue their education after high school.

And, we created new programs like Direct Lending and AmeriCorps, which help many more young people better afford college and give them the opportunity to further their education.

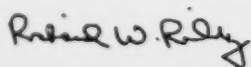
Our goal is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to get a quality education that will prepare him or her for a productive life. Every child who grows up in America needs to know the basics and also must have the ability to compete at the most sophisticated levels of learning—whether the field is computer science, health, mathematics, or literature.

These new initiatives can help spread the best ideas of our Blue Ribbon Schools to many more schools. We want high standards for every child and an end to giving too many of our children a watered-down curriculum. We need your help to achieve these results.

Linked to these legislative successes is a renewed effort to ensure that we are all working together to create new solutions in education. It is this philosophy that is at the core of our new broad-based Family Involvement Partnership for Learning that seeks to build on the essential foundation for learning—the American family. We know that all families can make a difference in their children's learning, and we also know that linked to academic achievement is the development of standards of character: hard work, discipline, respect for others, and good citizenship.

Education is all about learning to be a contributing, resourceful, caring, and responsible member of our national community. Every student at a Blue Ribbon School can be such a person. And every one of these students and programs can be an example to the rest of the nation.

Having seen some of the exciting learning opportunities in these schools, I am confident that we are well on our way to a future that brings even greater opportunities for young people to expand their learning horizons and to increase their future potential. Please use our new exciting initiatives and these "best ideas" to strengthen your school.



Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education



Introduction

God is in the details," taught Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the great German American architect and educator of architects: No matter how lofty or grand one's vision, the quality of the results depends on the painstaking care with which one translates that vision into concrete-and-steel reality.

This book is full of details, organized by categories of educational concerns that virtually all principals have found critical in preparing today's young generation for living in the 21st century. Here, for example, are "Getting Children Ready for School," reflecting the importance that research continues to place on the preschool years as a foundation for later, in-school achievement, and "Involving Parents," which recognizes that our youngsters "spend 91% of their time *outside* schools" and that our success requires principals to foster strong partnerships with Mom and Dad, who—whether they realize it or not—are their children's first, most influential teachers.

To ensure that this publication would give you useful information, we asked the principals of the 1993-1994 Blue Ribbon Schools—those selected by the U.S. Department of Education as outstanding elementary and middle schools—to share with us a "best idea" that they and their teachers have put into classroom practice. From more than 100 submissions, a panel of NAESP principals chose the ideas that they considered freshest, most innovative, and most pertinent to the major educational concerns of their colleagues.

This is the second volume of *Best Ideas From America's Blue Ribbon Schools*. I hope you will find it as stimulating as our first collection of "best ideas" and that this book will help you meet your goals as a member of the profession on which our society so heavily relies for its future.



Samuel G. Sava
Executive Director

National Association of Elementary School Principals



Getting ready to read.



Getting Children Ready for School

Today, there is incontrovertible scientific evidence that the years before children enter school, especially the first 3 years of life, are a critical time in children's intellectual and emotional development. It is no accident that "school readiness" is the first of the National Education Goals or that educators consistently note that this goal is the key to achieving all the others.

Yet as principals know all too well, a large and ever-growing number of children arrive at school on the first day without the skills they will need to be successful. In fact, when the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching asked kindergarten teachers to rate children on their readiness for school, these teachers said that one in three children (or 35%) is not prepared.

Principals of Blue Ribbon Schools are leaders in the effort to provide the best possible school beginning for young learners. From a reading program that works with mothers of newborns to a summer science camp that helps older students improve achievement throughout the summer, the programs described in this chapter make sure that every child gets off to a good start.

Preschool Visits Kindergarten

Description

The Goals 2000 initiative of the U.S. Department of Education inspired our K-8 elementary school to assist every child in coming to school ready to learn. The 3-year-olds meet twice weekly for 2 hours during which time children join in group play, often for the first time. In a nurturing atmosphere, they interact to develop a positive self-concept and sense of satisfaction with regard to their role in the world.

Our 4-year-olds gather three times per week for 2 1/2 hours during which time we continue to build upon skills indicated for successful development of the total child. Values, language use, motor skills, academic knowledge, and problem solving are emphasized. This program has been so popular that we have added an afternoon session.

Benefits

We are happy to report that children in the preschool programs are well prepared to enter the formal academic setting. Our staff reinforces values and skills, benefiting these youngsters through both firsthand and vicarious broadening experiences. We have also found that a high level of parental involvement and parent-child interaction facilitates the continuity of successful learning.

Sister Mary O'Brien, OSF, Principal
St. Lawrence Catholic Elementary School
Indianapolis, IN

Inviting School Success

Description

Have you ever thought of using a theme to capitalize on students' excitement about starting the school year? Annually, our staff promotes academic success and a positive

school climate using a technique that "invites" children to an adventure in learning.

Prior to the first day of class, we mail a packet to each child that includes a summary of William Purkey's *Inviting School Success* as well as a card with the school motto for the year. Attached to the card are special coupons supporting the theme. For example, one year "R.O.C.K." (Reading Occupies Cool Kids) was displayed on the card and coupons offered a free bookmark from the school librarian, a package of Lifesavers™ from the school secretary, a Band-Aid™ from the nurse, and a theme reading button from the principal.

This year, the card introduced the "Can Do Kids" and came with a coupon for a free "can" of Mountain "Dew."™

Benefits

Receiving a theme card from the principal before the beginning of school enhances the feeling in each child that he or she is an important part of our school. It "invites" all learners to be enthusiastic and to make the best of their year.

David Kearney, Principal
Tomahawk Elementary School
Olathe, KS

Kindergarten PREP

Description

In order to create the best possible school beginning for children and their parents, we use the "Prekindergarten Response to the Educational Process" (PREP) guidelines to anticipate future needs of prekindergarten students. During ongoing 60-minute sessions once a week, students are observed in planned group activities such as short lessons in language, math, safety, and listening. They get to know their teachers and the school, especially the art, music, physical education, and library areas.

Concurrently, parent education sessions are provided and include tips from kindergarten teachers on child behavior—understanding stages of development, building self-esteem, and encouraging responsibility through discipline. Planning is carried out by various staff members, from the principal and teachers to the school nurse, mother helpers, and kindergarten students who assist.

Benefits

PREP gives all concerned a head start on the school experience. Parents express appreciation for the early childhood handouts and resource books that help them understand their 5-year-olds. Any students evidencing behavioral youngness are easily identified for special consideration and planning.

Dr. Betty L. Barton, Principal
Cherokee Elementary School
Overland Park, KS

Summer Science Camp

Description

Three years ago I was thinking of ways to improve achievement while enriching the science experience of our students, who live in a rural setting, by extending the school year. Because funds were not available for more teaching hours, I decided to create a summer science camp for children from four small neighboring schools.

Notice went to district teachers that those who took an inquiry-based science course would be paid \$375 to act as facilitators for Grade 1-6 students in a camp setting. Funding came from an Eisenhower program and \$50 tuition fees. Fourteen people responded; the week after school ended, we ran a highly successful week-long camp for 72 children.

Our preparatory course has been expanded to include the use of computers. This past summer, we had 92 learners and focused on an integrated math-science-technology approach to the topic "Structures."

Benefits

Students now get a chance to spend large blocks of uninterrupted time on science-math-technology activities. This improved instruction is well integrated, leading toward growth in skills, independence, and enthusiasm. The camp provides a forum for teachers from different schools to exchange ideas at the end of each camp day. In a relaxed setting, both teachers and students feel free to experiment with new ideas.

Carol R. Hosford
Waitsfield Elementary School
Waitsfield, VT

Day-Before Open House

Description

Several years ago we identified the transition from summer break to the start of a new school year as something to improve. The anticipation of the first day of class made some children uneasy. Many younger children, when faced with a first separation or an all-day program, became so agitated that they cried. From their point of view, they were having a poor beginning.

A simple yet powerful solution was developed. We now host an open house the evening before school begins in the fall. For the first hour, teachers present an overview of their grade-level expectations, curriculum, discipline, schedules, and so forth. Parents are then free to visit other areas of the school or spend social time with their neighbors. Child care

is provided in the gym if needed. Based on their interests, families can come and go throughout the evening.

Benefits

Our teachers have enjoyed establishing positive first relationships with parents and their children. Students are more confident, coming to class prepared to learn. Having had their parents with them at the open house has sent a message about school's importance. They have had a chance to renew old acquaintances or to learn the physical layout of the buildings in a relaxed atmosphere. We find that this casual approach facilitates collaboration and supports instruction.

C. John Hanold, Principal
Magee Elementary School
Genesee Depot, WI

Birth Start

Description

The "Birth Start Early Reading" program, funded with a competitive grant written by teachers, identifies preschool children from birth to 3 years old in our rural locality. This innovative effort actively involves parents in their child's education, thus decreasing the number of at-risk learners prior to entry into kindergarten.

Readiness and language development are targeted. We aim to identify speech and other language inadequacies as early as possible in order to provide services when problems are noted. Also, our preschool children have access to enrichment materials and social opportunities not otherwise available in this rural area.

With the assistance of volunteers, students, and staff members, all participating parents and children meet in the school library for 60 minutes on the third Wednesday of

each month. Various activities revolve around puppets, videos, books, puzzles, and tapes. In addition, parents may check out reading materials for use at home. By sending a small toy or book to the home of a new baby, we are involving the community in the activities offered at school.

Benefits

The Birth Start program has resulted in a "bonding" effect between parents and school that lends itself to a healthy, meaningful rapport. Our volunteer program is growing and all activities at school are well attended. We believe this is due, in part, to the welcoming process of Birth Start.

Dorothy H. Rhoades, Principal
Troy Elementary School
Troy, WV



Sharing the wonder of discovery.



Increasing Student Achievement

In today's schools, everything from immunizations to after-school day care is provided. This makes it easy, sometimes, to lose track of the fact that the primary mission of the schools is education.

Blue Ribbon Schools haven't forgotten this, however. They focus on what's important, which is ensuring that all children have the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge that will enable them to be productive citizens and workers in the next century.

The programs described in this chapter demonstrate some of the ways that Blue Ribbon Schools are increasing student achievement. They include an after-school enrichment program made possible, according to the principal, by a combination of "parent fees, grant money, and frugal management." Another school has developed a mentor program that is enhancing achievement as it boosts self-esteem. Still another has found that multiage classrooms give children the opportunity to progress at their own pace. Each of the programs demonstrates how Blue Ribbon Schools are helping all children achieve.

Action Afternoons

Description

On Thursday afternoons, all regular activity comes to a halt. It's time for "Action Afternoons." While some youngsters learn about monsters in literature, others are using pipe cleaners to build three-dimensional shapes, or having fun solving nontraditional math problems.

This program is a 6-week activity-based extension of the regular curriculum for all students in Grades 1 through 5. From 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. on each of the Thursdays, every child chooses from a selection of 25 offerings the one he or she would like to attend. Minicourses led by staff and parents include beginning French, quilting, calligraphy, stationery making, sign language, basket making, easy chemistry, Chinese New Year, computer Lego Logo, drama, candy making, film making, and baton twirling, to name a few.

The Schoolwide Enrichment Team, consisting of teachers and parents, developed this program to supplement the before- and after-school clubs program. By offering enrichment activities during the school day, all students benefit.

Benefits

Youngsters get to interact across grade levels on Action Afternoons, with older students often acting as mentors. Staff members enjoy sharing their talent in noncurricular areas and show themselves to students in a new light. For example, the learning disabilities teacher teaches baton twirling and the school nurse teaches candy making.

Several activities were so successful they were continued as after-school clubs. Everyone learns new skills, insights, and appreciation of each other with these benefits extending in untold ways to the academic classroom environment.

Helena N. Butkiewicz, Principal
Roger Sherman Elementary School
Meriden, CT

First-Grade Readers

Description

Although learning to read in first grade is critical to future school success, too many of our first graders were not becoming proficient in reading. Basal and whole-language approaches did not seem to impact these numbers.

We employed a consultant and inservice teachers on the ideas of Marie Clay, a noted New Zealand educator. Clay's method stresses accurate, minute assessments of reading readiness skills. Based on her work, we found amazing deficits in learners at our school.

The next step was to remediate deficiencies on a one-to-one basis. Each teacher took a student per day for 30 minutes while an aide watched the class. Students read a high-interest book at the level they could successfully master. They also wrote a sentence every day and practiced sight words. By doing phonemic segmentation daily, children were able to learn that words can have more than one sound. The first graders who received this help scored significantly higher than a control group in both reading proficiency and comprehension.

Benefits

The repeated reading of previously mastered material proved a powerful tool in allowing students to feel a sense of accomplishment at reading before advancing. As skills increased in our program, teachers reported dramatic changes in classroom performance in areas other than reading. Those who had not participated before became involved in all subject areas. Teachers reported big smiles and happy children in their classes. Perhaps reading is the key.

Lauren C. Sullivan, Principal
Interlachen Elementary School
Interlachen, FL

LEAP Notice

Description

We have initiated the "Learning and Education Assistance Program" (LEAP) in which certified teachers spend additional time with students who are behind in their assignments. Most often, the teacher who assigns a lesson is the one who assists because this person best understands the learner and the desired outcome.

Students are requested to stay after school 45 minutes to 1 hour for as many days as necessary to catch up on their work. They are given a 2-day-notice form to take home for parents to sign and return. If those who receive notices complete their work before the scheduled after-school session, they do not have to attend. The LEAP program takes precedence over cocurricular activities such as drama, music, and athletics.

Benefits

This program provides notice to parents that their child is not functioning at the appropriate level and describes the nature of corrective measures. We hope to prevent students from falling so far behind in required work that they lose motivation to keep up or catch up. If they fail to cooperate, they may be given a behavioral detention.

Each step of LEAP intends to benefit our children by keeping them accountable. In our experience, students who complete their class work at the appropriate level and quality also develop a strong sense of self-worth due to their achievement.

Daniel J. Netz, Principal
Pella Christian Grade School
Pella, IA

Students to Students

Description

Our school has developed a tutorial program that gives local community college education trainees an opportunity to work with at-risk children. "Students to Students" has grown so that it now incorporates a number of educational services. For example, the college students meet with pre-kindergarten through sixth graders during a block of time twice a week. Another program, held after school for fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade-identified pupils, helps strengthen study and homework skills, learning to work as a team, and looking at the qualities of leadership and self-esteem.

Teaching and learning are happening on numerous levels. Inservice sessions are arranged twice per semester in the areas of math and language arts as well as the characteristics of at-risk children. Parents are invited to visit the Students-to-Students classrooms. Mentor teachers meet once a month during the year to plan for collaborative activities with the students.

Benefits

The college students and teachers are building close associations in developing individual plans for those in Students-to-Students tutorials. Multiple student assessments have determined success in the areas of increased motivation, self-esteem, and academic progress.

Linda L. Wilhelm, Principal
Ridgeview Elementary School
Olathe, KS

Writer's Tea Party

Description

First-grade students publish their own stories as part of a whole-language, literature-based reading curriculum at our school. After students formulate their ideas and write rough drafts, they collaborate with seventh graders, who edit the writings with the younger children.

The first graders complete their second drafts and have the teacher review their stories. Each child prints and illustrates a final copy. Bookbindings are then chosen from wallpaper samples, and the finished "published books" are assembled. Parents and friends come to a "Writer's Tea Party," where the boys and girls read their books aloud to a supportive audience that extends much praise to them afterwards.

Benefits

Younger children are so proud of their published books. The entire experience boosts their self-esteem to a new high. Older students also enjoy this activity and learn how to detect grammar and punctuation errors as they edit the writing. This collaborative effort makes learning fun and aids in both academic and social skills.

Sharon B. Coll
St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Elementary School
New Orleans, LA

Recognition Breakfasts

Description

We hold student recognition breakfasts each time grades are issued in order to honor those who improve their scores in at least two subjects without declining in any area. Classwork is carefully monitored between report periods to identify children who may be eligible.

Both parents and students are invited to attend a continental breakfast financed by the local Kiwanis chapter before school begins on the morning of the awards. We present a certificate to the children as their name is announced. Staff and Kiwanians are also invited to attend, thereby demonstrating to pupils that many people are interested in them and proud of their achievement.

Benefits

This program strives to convey that learning improvement, and not just mastery, is important and worthy of recognition. Through our breakfasts, we are able to reach a segment of the student body that might not receive encouragement if we were only to honor high achievers. Regardless of a student's grade average or status, each one becomes motivated to improve and eventually may acquire honor or merit roll status.

Dr. Stan Lipinski, Principal
Kirtland Middle School
Kirtland, OH

Adult Partners

Description

At our school, adults have come to the rescue of at-risk youngsters in Grades 7 and 8. Small groups of one to three students are paired with volunteers from our staff who support them in their school progress. After being identified by counselors, administrators, teachers, or other staff members as possibly at risk, these children meet with their adult partners over the course of the next 2 years.

We have sponsored parent-student-adult partner activities such as breakfasts, school beautification projects, and lunches with funds received from our school business partner, Texaco, Inc. In addition, students have designed a special

T-shirt and held a fundraiser to benefit middle school students who were victims of a hurricane in Florida.

The adult partners arrange to get together with students before school, during lunch hour, or after school at least once each week. They learn to know each child better, review school work, listen to concerns, and develop a positive, friendly relationship. To facilitate these meetings, a handbook of possible activities has been prepared and distributed to each volunteer mentor.

Benefits

The idea of adult partnering has helped our at-risk students build self-esteem by making possible a relationship of trust and confidence. Children know that there is someone in the building who cares for them in a unique way and who is available to assist with problems or provide positive reinforcement for a job well done. The students are eager to participate and appear to have an increased interest in school. We have noticed that their motivation to succeed academically has improved significantly. Those children whose focus might have been too intense have been encouraged to maintain a balance between their academics and their other school programs and activities.

We believe that parents are likewise encouraged to take a more active role in the education of their children, thus increasing their contact and involvement with the school. We are proud of our efforts to bring our school business partner, Texaco, Inc., together with students, parents, and staff members in a program that benefits all participants.

Dr. Rosemary G. Brooke, Principal
Louis M. Klein Middle School
Harrison, NY

Multiage Classroom

Description

Multiage classrooms had their roots in the one-room village school that combined age groups out of necessity. The restructuring impetus of today is based instead on capturing the learning advantages of mixed-age groups. This system encourages students to follow their more individual rates of progress, adjust to personal cognitive, emotional, and social needs, and naturally learn from one another as children do outside of school. Retention becomes less of an issue because youngsters love to copy their older classmates. By the same token, older students love to "teach" newly learned skills to younger ones, thereby strengthening their own understanding.

At our school, we have approximately 8 first, 8 second and 8 third graders in one classroom. Their academic year is centered around thematic units such as "Discovery," "Change," and "The Circle of Life." Fourth- and fifth-grade combinations also consist of equal numbers of each level. When completing any one activity, students work in both like and unlike groups at different times. The day is divided into blocks of integrated studies—literature, science, social studies, and math. Math groups, on the other hand, are assigned strictly by age.

Benefits

We have had vast parental support for our multiage approach. Some of the positive results we have encountered are listed as follows: a) Siblings are able to learn together; b) parents stay in the program for more than 1 year; c) teachers can better assess student progress over time; d) grade level

barriers are removed; d) fewer children are sent for special services; e) younger children get a sense of the future, and older ones see where they have been; f) interest level is high and behavior problems reduced; g) students work at their own pace instead of competing; h) individual differences are respected; and i) a variety of long-term caring relationships produces tremendous social growth.

Dorothy T. Vienne
Thomas A. Edison Elementary School
Tonawanda, NY

Learning Styles

Description

Taking responsibility for one's own learning is an important goal at our school. To help students achieve this, we all completed learning style inventories during orientation at the beginning of the school year. The following week, an afternoon was devoted to acquainting each student with his or her special style—visual, auditory, or bodily-kinesthetic. Students formed groups with others of their preferred style or combination of styles. The teacher then shared research data and personal learning experiences concerning the most effective ways of receiving, processing, and giving back information for each style.

Within a week, parents participated in an evening workshop on learning styles so that they too could experience their child's style—how this child best processed information. Parents were encouraged to complete inventories for themselves and other family members as well.

Benefits

What a world of understanding has opened among the students, teachers, and parents at our school! We are still talking about learning and processing information. Students discuss advantages and disadvantages of their particular style, seek compensation techniques from teachers and peers, and learn supportive study skills.

Our teachers are more sensitive about reaching every student with their instructional approach. Parents better understand their children's preference—like gravitating to a quiet or a "loud" space to study—and give them the freedom and encouragement to work from acknowledged strengths.

Nadine Mouser, Principal
St. Thomas More Parish School
Houston, TX

Accelerated Learning Center

Description

Our "Accelerated Learning Center" is a specially staffed department for aiding classroom teachers with the unique requirements of students identified as at risk, special education, gifted and talented, limited English proficient, and Chapter 1 math, as well as those whose previous educational experience is inconsistent with our school standards. The support team at the center consists of teachers proficient in all areas in which learners might be challenged.

Delivery of services is flexible, depending on the needs of grade levels and individual students. Such services include teaching a heterogeneous language arts class to lower the pupil-teacher ratio in all other classes, team teaching with a classroom teacher, consultations for teachers, demonstration lessons, and teaching small groups both in and outside of the classroom.

Benefits

Feedback from teachers, parents, and especially our children indicates that the Accelerated Learning Center has made a significant difference in student achievement and self-esteem. Because of these services, students receive more individual attention and ultimately improve more quickly. Coteaching success stories are common with new ideas generated by the entire staff.

Anne Y. Stephens, Principal
Fort Sam Houston Elementary School
San Antonio, TX

Extended Enrichment

Description

Have you ever wanted to make a place for students who are lacking attention after school? Through a combination of parent fees, grant money, and frugal management, we have created a safe and productive program for children who need after-school care. They have available activities that include homework supervision, use of the computer lab, crafts, multicultural interaction, recreation, and nourishing snacks. Those who are behind in their academic studies may receive small group tutoring. This program is provided every school day from dismissal to 6:00 p.m., with parents making all the arrangements for transportation home.

Benefits

By using school facilities more hours each day, our students are enriched when they might otherwise be lacking in quality attention. Besides leading to higher academic achievement, our quality program fosters collaborative relationships among parents, teachers, and students. Families know we care about what happens to children after class and support them in their parenting efforts.

Shirley Henderson, Principal
Joseph Keels Elementary School
Columbia, SC



Bringing out the very best.



Fostering Citizenship and Character

Schools are not only where children learn, but they are also where they learn to get along with one another. As former President Harry S. Truman once observed, "The fundamental purpose of our educational system is to instill a moral code in the rising generation and create a citizenship which will be responsible for the welfare of the nation."

Increasingly, schools are teaching citizenship and character in the same way they teach reading and math. They are working with communities to define those core values, like honesty, hard work, and respect for others and for oneself, that make it possible for our democracy to continue.

Blue Ribbon Schools have been leaders in this effort. Their activities include buddy programs that reach across grade levels, across town, and even across the ocean. They have found fun and creative ways to recognize children for positive behavior and encourage service to others. One school even provides baby-sitting training with supervised practical experience included.

This focus on citizenship and character seems to be paying off. Many of the schools featured in this chapter report that they are spending less time on discipline and behavior problems and instead are spending more time helping children learn.

Children as . . .

Description

With funding from community grants, our school offers organized activities that reflect three general themes: "Take Care of Yourself," "Take Care of Each Other," and "Take Care of This Place."

A function of "Children as Caregivers" provided baby-sitting training for 18 fifth-grade students who practiced on children of parents attending our monthly parenting classes. During each meeting, four baby-sitters were supervised by one teacher. A year-end trip to an out-of-state recreational attraction was the reward for baby-sitting at least four meetings.

"Children as Earth Keepers" supervised 20 fourth and fifth graders in building a bird sanctuary on campus, in addition to creating butterfly gardens and other plantings around school.

Fourth- and fifth-grade art students participating in "Children as Designers and Directors" transformed a courtyard between several buildings using artwork and plants. This area now resembles a minivillage. They also purchased a table and benches for our pond, which serves as an outdoor science lab.

Benefits

The Caregivers have an opportunity to develop responsibility while giving to others. The baby-sitters, for example, learned the value of volunteering and in turn received a trip—a first for many of them who come from economically disadvantaged homes.

The Earth Keepers and Designers were able to enhance the aesthetics of our grounds while learning to appreciate a clean, attractive environment. By making this connection to nature, these children expanded their own personal world to include the earth around them.

Norma J. Bumpus, Principal
Leeds Elementary School
Leeds, AL

Town Meeting

Description

The wise African saying, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," is the inspiration for Friday "town meetings" at our school. On these occasions, all 310 children, 20 faculty and staff, and more than 60 parents gather to salute the "Super Kids" of the week.

Next, the entire assembly participates in an open forum facilitated by the principal. Any person in the room may ask a question, make a suggestion, or critique a program. The only rules are that one person may speak at a time and that each person must be respectful in their words and tone.

During this meeting, we have changed school rules, added more equipment for recess play, made clarification regarding clubs and sports eligibility, and resolved "too much homework" issues. At the suggestion of a third grader, we even converted from single toilet tissue sheets to toilet rolls, resulting in a huge financial savings and a lot less litter in the restrooms!

Benefits

Our entire community knows that on Friday mornings every person has a voice and a respectful hearing at school. The town meeting has become a vital time for all of us to make effective changes. Children, especially, realize they have a say in their educational lives. This gives each student an opportunity to both listen to others' opinions and speak in front of peers without criticism or ridicule.

Dr. Raymond L. John, Principal
St. Joseph Elementary School
Alameda, CA

Sunrise

Description

"Sunrise" is a twice-weekly gathering of all kindergarten through sixth-grade students. On Tuesday and Thursday

mornings, from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m., children and teachers meet in the band room to share information, listen to others, and enjoy singing together.

Each grade is responsible for a part of the program—introductions, announcements, weather predictions, lunch menus, and so forth. Special awards and birthday cards are given to students by the principal, and all are invited to share personal items or experiences. Poems, stories, plays, and projects are voluntarily presented by children, teachers, or whole classrooms.

We are often entertained by guest speakers, community members, and professional performers. Some talk about their hobbies, vocations, and travel experiences. As a concluding activity, the music teacher conducts the group in singing new and old songs before dismissing students to continue learning in their individual classrooms.

Benefits

Sunrise is a great time for parents and other community members to be actively involved in our school. Students develop an appreciation for and acceptance of different age groups as well as the varied interests and abilities of others. Listening skills are enhanced and children learn to speak in front of a large group. The entire elementary populace gains a sense of responsibility and pride in themselves and the school through unified support and concern for one another.

Jan Jess, Principal
Alden Community School
Alden, IA

Project Pals

Description

"Project Pals" is a simple concept whereby a responsible and caring fifth grader is paired with a primary (K-3) child

who would benefit from a friend or role model. To begin the program, the two students are referred by their teachers to achieve the most compatible partnership, and each must have a signed parental permission.

Older students receive training regarding positive expectations, requirements, and confidentiality issues. Each week the fifth graders are asked to send their pal a note through the in-school mail, make an informal contact, and meet for sharing in a large 20-minute group session. They also pick up and deliver their partner at the classroom in order to provide additional time together.

Numerous projects are planned that highlight their personal "favorites." Art work, featuring home and school themes, and special occasion cards are popular activities. Pals work together on these projects and then share. Sometimes the older students are asked to bring a game, book, or puzzle from home. To end the year, there is a picnic for all 90 children.

Benefits

Project Pals costs little, but the relationships that develop and the improved feelings of self-worth are priceless. The younger children improve their social skills and make a friend who accepts them unconditionally. Wearing used clothing, having reading difficulties, or being shy is of no consequence to their older friend.

The fifth graders also benefit because they develop leadership skills while modeling appropriate behavior and attitudes. They experience a feeling of altruism, receiving nothing in return but a smile, a note, or a hand extended in friendship.

Rick McHargue, Principal
Crestwood Elementary School
Crestwood, KY

Shades of Brown

Description

Our school sponsors an after-school group for children of color—17% of our total school population. “Shades of Brown” is facilitated by three classroom teachers who meet with students once each week to focus on cultural awareness issues, understanding individual differences, working together cooperatively, and nurturing positive social skills.

Through a variety of activities, students in this program strengthen their self-concept and social abilities. Emphasis is also placed on academic achievement and making healthy choices. Each year the students plan, produce, and present a variety show, “A Night at the Apollo,” for the entire school community.

Benefits

We believe that a program that challenges each student to examine how he or she can help build positive relationships is the way to approach the promotion of cultural awareness. Shades of Brown has precipitated a sense of togetherness and belonging both at our school and in the community.

Debra Fincham, Principal
Oak Grove Intermediate School
Bloomington, MN

Habits of Character

Description

Our student body learns the habits of good citizenship in three ways. The first is through example. Students witness the cooperation, hard work, and friendliness of the staff, administration, and faculty. Recently, we displayed photographs of all school adults with a favorite book and a description of fond memories.

Secondly, the Character Education Committee regularly plans events around positive character traits. One month highlights "Responsibility," with a new rap song taught in music classes and sung during assembly; another, "Honesty," with public acknowledgment of honest actions; and yet another, "Helpfulness," with classroom photographic displays that show children gaining understanding by helping others.

The third focus on citizenship is direct instruction through a series of activities emphasizing peaceful conflict resolution, problem solving, cooperation, self-esteem, and responsibility. Drug Abuse Resistance Education, an extensive mentorship project, the Primary Health Program, and a Leaders' Club are examples of these formal efforts.

Benefits

We have experienced fewer behavior problems, a kinder atmosphere, and observable positive actions that support exemplary citizenship as a result of our attention to building better habits of character. The best lessons of citizenship, however, are received through living in a caring, nurturing community where all concerned demonstrate good character every day.

Joyce A. Westgate, Principal
Benjamin Franklin Elementary School
Binghamton, NY

Leadership Corps

Description

Building leaders one student at a time is the goal of our inner-city leadership program. School staff actively recruit fifth graders to engage in a formal application and interview process. Once they join, the corps members participate in intensive training with the guidance counselor, represent

our school in community projects, act as hall supervisors before and after school, and influence school policies by serving on a variety of site-based management committees.

This year the "Leadership Corps" will be matched with designated "Adult Community Achievers" as part of a YMCA collaboration. Monthly meetings include special projects and tours of business, government, and colleges.

Benefits

Besides adding to our community, Leadership Corps is fun. The structured activities have proven an excellent incentive for inner-city young people to be responsible and achieve in ways that result in productive citizenship.

Kathleen C. Hood, Principal
Carl Benner School
Coatesville, PA

Community Service

Description

We have initiated a community service learning program in which students in our school adopt a local agency for the entire year. Youngsters visiting health care facilities acquire understanding and respect for senior citizens. Other groups, serving preschool and primary inner-city children, gain a greater awareness of different cultures. "Kids Involved in Government" (KIG) examine current issues, using critical thinking skills and discussion to resolve problems.

Reflection on the service learning experience is integrated into the school curriculum. Students keep personal logs and then illustrate and publish their observations. These "books" are given to each respective agency at the end of the year. In addition, students complete a self-evaluation form, have an evaluation interview with their advisor, publish an electronic newsletter, and participate in a panel presentation.

Benefits

Community service gives students a chance to demonstrate social and civic responsibility, increase service skills, and act ethically in service settings. Virtually all accounts show that participating children have had a personally satisfying experience. An added bonus is that these real-life situations enhance academic skills, including higher level thinking and learning by reflection. Our community service is making a difference through actions of caring, extending compassion to many in need.

Sister Mary Carol Gentile, ASCJ, Principal
St. Rocco School
Johnston, RI

Adopt a School

Description

Our school, comprised primarily of students from upper-middle-class families, has adopted a primary school where 80% of the children do not speak English and 90% are offered a free or reduced-price lunch. We believe interaction with this district priority school helps our youngsters recognize their standard of living is above the norm and that all good citizens "give back" to the community.

In the "Adopt-a-School" program, parents and students perform valuable services throughout the school year. Families provide classroom supplies, treats for winter holidays and Valentine's Day, Turkey Bucks to purchase turkeys, a food drive for custodians and cafeteria workers, and a Faculty Appreciation Tea. Our sixth graders host a winter concert especially for their friends across town. Most importantly, pairs of students at each site get together to read, complete art projects, or just visit.

Benefits

Involvement with a school that is a direct contrast economically and academically has fostered a deep sense of commitment and kinship on the part of our children and parents. We learn that one can communicate friendship even if a common language does not exist. Exposure to an array of cultures at our "adopted school" brings the real world closer to our "sheltered" population.

Staff members at the school we have gifted are very appreciative. They constantly strive to involve our students as mentors and models for their pupils. Furthermore, the relationship between the two schools has become a model for others interested in implementing a powerful program to achieve a similar goal.

Vaughn Gross, Principal
Brentfield Elementary School
Dallas, TX

Café Florence

Description

"Café Florence" resulted when a parent committee convened to help formulate a way to reverse the noticeable decline in cafeteria behavior and table manners; we wanted to accomplish this as a school improvement goal. The group took a decidedly nontraditional approach, developing a comprehensive etiquette program that emphasizes social awareness training.

The committee met with each class to conduct a fun, and often lively, discussion of proper social etiquette. They also developed a written set of rules of acceptable behavior that was sent home to be signed by each student's parents. This helped foster compliance and provided guidance to caretakers for supplementary training.

With hundreds of hours of volunteer work, our parents transformed the drab cafeteria, giving it all the Mediterranean flavor of an Italian trattoria. They painted vivid murals,

creating colorful characters such as a grandmother with a big bowl of pasta or a family enjoying a candlelit dinner. Pillars and window transoms now feature birds and bugs scattered among purple and green grapes. Lace curtains trim windows that advertise the café hours. Five of the committee members, calling themselves the "Etiquette Spies," each monitor the cafeteria one day a week.

Benefits

The hard work of parents has imbued our cafeteria with all the ambiance of a fine restaurant. Students enjoy their lunch periods and the opportunity to visit quietly with classmates. They feel free to excuse themselves from the table momentarily if they should need a utensil or condiment.

It is particularly noteworthy that the children themselves have come to expect good table manners and courtesy toward one another. Finally, the meaningful involvement of parents in an area of school operation that is often the subject of criticism is beneficial for us and the entire community.

Suzanne M. Pettit, Principal
Florence Elementary School
Keller, TX

Leadership Link

Description

"You Can Always Make a Difference" is the theme of "Leadership Link," a program formed to extend and enhance the perspective of fifth-grade students at our school. Representatives from each class have an opportunity to interact with leaders to discover what they do—that is, care about others, learn from both success and failure, change the way things are, work with others, and set examples.

Coordinated and guided by the principal, students interview parents and teachers to find out how they learned from trial and error and how education has been important in their lives. They discover the particulars of community leadership

at school board and city council meetings. Furthermore, business leadership is explored when each student spends one-half day "on the job."

The principal prepares students before each interview, guiding them to an optimum learning experience. The youngsters write about their observations, using guides provided in a special notebook, and ultimately share this with others at school. In a culminating assembly, participants express their new knowledge and receive a booklet of their reports and program photographs.

Benefits

Leadership Link reinforces that leaders are "everyday" people making a difference. Students witness that small actions are noteworthy, that personal risks and unpopular decisions are often a price worth paying—an idea that is critical in the middle school environment they will soon enter.

Just as students are energized by this program, our community benefits because the link goes both ways. Community and business leaders are also revitalized and strengthen their participation in lifelong learning by interacting with students.

Glenda Adkinson, Principal
Hill Elementary School
Austin, TX

Koalaty Kids

Description

Where can you find furry-headed marsupials; kids proudly walking across the stage to display ribbons, pins, and certificates; teachers rapping; children singing; and parents clapping wildly and snapping photographs? Every 6 weeks at our "Koalaty Kids" celebration, of course!

The expectation of "quality" in every child's schoolwork, attitude, and behavior provides the roadmap for identifying Koalaty Kids. Student-centered outcomes, especially achieving a healthy sense of self-esteem and pride, are front and center in the program. Parent and community involvement is essential. Students are encouraged to develop good work habits by understanding and learning the value of putting forth their best effort all the time. Reading, the cornerstone of learning, is featured as students become self-motivated readers.

Our motto is "Don't Be Anything Less Than You Can Be!" We celebrate students who go above and beyond what is expected, are cooperative learners with their classmates, have perfect attendance, and complete work on time to the best of their ability. A Koalaty Helper also notices and assists when others need help. Every 6 weeks we honor those who have stretched a little farther—in attendance, reading, writing, or achieving a common goal.

Benefits

Now in our third successful year of celebrating student achievement, we are totally self-funded. Parents have become "Partners in Education," and local businesses offer donations.

Self-esteem and citizenship are built through recognizing students' best efforts and giving them continual praise and encouragement. We are pleased to see classes working toward a common goal. They have a new sense of "quality," especially in the areas of reading and writing. In addition, attendance has increased because each 6 weeks marks a new starting point. Most beneficial is the unity this program brings to our school and community.

Jane Cousins, Principal
Jack D. Johnson Elementary School
Southlake, TX



Making good decisions.



Creating Safe and Disciplined Schools

There is an epidemic of violence in this country, and elementary and middle school students are not immune. For example, the Center for Demographic Policy recently reported that of the incidents involving guns on school property, 24% involved students in middle schools and 12% involved elementary school students.

A recent survey conducted by the National School Boards Association found that in four out of five school districts, including rural, urban, and suburban areas, the incidence of violence had increased. Clearly, schools must make creating safe and disciplined schools a priority.

Blue Ribbon Schools have already done so. Ideas described in this chapter include a schoolwide behavior program that recognizes success and provides early intervention when students make mistakes. Another program teaches students decision-making skills and then encourages them to make appropriate choices. Each of the programs is helping schools reach the National Education Goal of becoming "free of drugs and violence, [offering] a disciplined environment conducive to learning."

Recreational Activities

Description

With a modest district grant and countless community donations, we began a recreational program for Grades 3-6, specifically targeting students needing improvement in social and leadership skills. Sport competitions and clinics of all types have been organized for these children, as well as a variety of special-interest clubs. Groups meet at noon or after school and are supported by volunteering parents and teachers.

A sampling of activities follows:

1. A teacher organized students to play soccer during lunch recess and held an end-of-the-season tournament.
2. A parent, with the help of a local professional, sponsored a bridge club for fifth and sixth graders plus the Gifted and Talented program. Students were provided with a basic game book and cards and participated in a contest on a weekend.
3. A teacher and parent met with students and used Geosafari computer games to increase geography knowledge and appreciation. The group also supported students in the National Geographic Bee competition.
4. "All Things Are Possible" was organized by Soroptimists, a business and community service club, and promotes self-esteem; every sixth-grade girl participated in 1-hour, bimonthly meetings.

This year new clubs will be added for such topics as storytelling, history, Spanish, and ecology.

Benefits

The recreational program has been very successful in reducing noontime playground conflicts and increasing participation in campus activities, both planned and student initiated. With over 80% participation, students are gaining self-confidence, learning social skills, becoming good sports,

investigating new hobbies, and joining clubs of their interest. Our clubs also create positive and informal interaction among teachers, parents, and students.

Elaine Eichelberg, Principal
Lowell Elementary School
Boise, ID

Student Expectations

Description

We have a reputation in our community as being a "caring school." At the same time, the staff strongly believes that with the right of students to be there comes the responsibility to respect the rights of others. We also challenge pupils to become actively and productively involved in their own academic learning.

When discipline is a consistent, low-key, matter-of-fact "expectation" for everyone, children can enjoy school in a safe and caring atmosphere. With the input of a discipline committee representing students, teachers, parents, and administrators, we have created a sound, well-articulated policy based on consequences that encourage students to behave appropriately.

Benefits

Our staff feels that young people who experience consistent, logical, and realistic consequences for their behavior have positive control over their lives. We help children evaluate their choices and become actively involved in finding acceptable alternatives to irresponsible behavior. To us, "Student Expectations" is the major reason why our school experiences no regular discipline problems.

Peter W. King, Principal
Arnett C. Lines School
Barrington, IL

What's Right?

Description

Parents at our school were concerned about the social pressures that their young children face every day on the playground, in class, and after school. Several parents decided to institute a plan to help students cope with peer pressure in a constructive manner. Parents are trained to work with students in the classroom, discussing specific problems, offering possible solutions, and role-playing to provide what to say when "caught-in-the-middle" between friend's disagreements.

What is challenging for students? Not being invited to parties, pressure to have name-brand shoes and clothes, differing family philosophies and rules, unfair rumors and reputations, gossip, and the like. The "What's Right" program emphasizes the hurtful nature of these situations and highlights the responsibility young people have to diffuse conflict and facilitate solutions rather than stand by and do nothing.

Benefits

Over a 6-year period, we have shared this successful program with many other schools across the nation. The primary responsibility to teach moral values and behavior lies with parents who deeply appreciate the support of What's Right. Teachers find they are freed from the time-consuming task of dealing with so many social problems that detract from learning.

The real winners are our students! They are provided with concrete, specific ways to deal with everyday life and given tools and encouragement to stand up and do what's right.

Michele S. Gummer, Principal
Blessed Sacrament Elementary and Middle School
Fort Mitchell, KY

Project Peace

Description

"Project Peace" is our proactive plan for creating a positive school climate. Together, parents and teachers reexamined our mission statement and listed attributes students need to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner. The "Peace Practices" are apologize, get help, use humor, ask them to stop, avoid, postpone, share, and take a chance. Training was provided to give parents and teachers the tools for teaching the practices.

Every student receives yearly instruction in Project Peace. First graders receive a series of five trainings beginning with recognizing conflict and progressing through using the techniques. Second and third grades receive a half-hour refresher course.

Fourth and fifth grades become Peacekeepers—students trained to help others. They help with everything from opening milk cartons in the cafeteria to settling their own conflicts. The training focuses on enabling older students to build their own skills and become positive role models.

Benefits

We have created a place where our motto is a reality: Working together really does work. There is an increased cooperative approach to solving conflicts, a strong teacher cohesion towards behavior expectations, an increased student ownership of environment and behavior, and increased self-esteem and pride. Younger students have a wide range of positive role models, and we now have a common language when discussing behaviors.

Jim Pinsoneault, Principal
Waukazoo Elementary School
Holland, MI

Productive Behavior

Description

Because safe and orderly schools provide an optimal learning climate, we are eager to have students both value and choose appropriate behavior. Our comprehensive program to affect personal behavior teaches around 30 social, 20 character, and 5 major productivity skills. In this way, we indicate exactly what we expect.

For example, during the first 6 days of school, students learn approximately 10 top skills in order to start the school year off on the right foot. We practice with the youngsters and remind them frequently of expectations. Teachers receive lesson plans with explanations of performance indicators and activities. Preschool inservice is also provided, and a schoolwide schedule shows how to proceed. Some of the basic lessons include following instructions, staying out of trouble, accepting consequences, coping with unfair treatment, being respectful, bus safety, and violence and sexual harassment prevention.

Benefits

Because many students come to school ill equipped to respond to conflicts in problem-solving ways, we see that the school has an enormous role to play in integrating important social skills into the curriculum. Our intermediate grades have had moderate success with peer mediation, but this program often addresses student conflicts after the fact. So we believe the school must go further.

Some may suggest that social skills are best taught by parents rather than schools. Unfortunately, with the breakdown of family life, there is no consistency in this area. In fact, many adults also have poor interpersonal skills. Therefore, we have found it imperative that educators establish positive behaviors as part of the campus code of conduct.

Dr. J. Bradley Johnson, Principal
Cedar Manor Intermediate Center
St. Louis Park, MN

Apples of My Eye

Description

We look for ways to reinforce positive behavior, perfect attendance, and academic achievement at school. One ongoing activity is the "Principal's Lunch Bunch" for which children are chosen by peer evaluation. Students participate in weekly class meetings to discuss their own progress, practice leadership skills, and show ownership for their behavior.

These meetings also stress academic achievement. By using charts to monitor citizenship, homework, attendance, and daily performance, teachers encourage pupils to check their own progress, seek help, or ask someone in need to be a "study buddy."

At the end of the meetings, each classroom selects someone outstanding who is invited to eat lunch, plus a special dessert of homemade cake and ice cream, with the principal. Then all the awardees write an autobiography, have their pictures taken, and receive a certificate and an apple (our school logo) pencil. The photographs and writings are prominently displayed in the hall with the caption "Apples of My Eye."

Benefits

Besides helping teachers track student progress, this program encourages children to be responsible for their own progress. With adult supervision, they review activities and think about the contributions each one has made for the week. We hope to build character by inculcating democratic values, thus creating more self-disciplined individuals.

Teacola H. Offut, Principal
Orchard Elementary School
Cleveland, OH

Good Life Program

Description

Our "Good Life Program," based on William Glasser's control theory, provides students with opportunities to fulfill their needs for belonging, freedom, power, and fun by making choices that are beneficial for them. We teach children to think independently and make correct choices.

The "growth plan" establishes a campuswide point system for keeping track of student progress. Five levels range from the entry point, where the basic privilege is to earn points, to the gold card level, where extremely responsible students enjoy an array of privileges. The latest innovations include the student-operated First Campus Bank and the Super Gold Store.

The beauty of the system lies in the opportunity children have in making decisions. And, as in real life, sometimes an inappropriate choice is made—so the "time-out system" is employed. The system is not a punishment but rather an opportunity to reflect on what has happened and on how to make correction. A student then proceeds through an "individual assistance plan" to develop a goal and plan of action.

Benefits

This program is a coercion-free way of teaching responsibility by showing the advantages of making good choices while reinforcing the concept of being in control of the variables that make it all happen. Students and teachers support each other in setting goals for academic success and effective interactions.

The "Good Life Program" develops a sense of belonging, promotes problem-solving and decision-making skills, and develops a "way of life" that results in high student participation rates and attendance along with extremely low incidence of disciplinary problems.

Alda Benavides, Principal
E. B. Reyna Elementary School
La Joya, TX

Demonstrating Excellence

Description

"Project STRIDE"—Students Taking Responsibility in Demonstrating Excellence—is a comprehensive school-wide behavior program that recognizes excellence in attendance, behavior, and academics. It is based on incentives, such as gold cards presented at quarterly assemblies, that can be redeemed at a school store for supplies, coupons, and privileges. "Friday Incentive Times" are celebrated twice each quarter with 50 minutes of student-selected recreation for those showing responsible behavior.

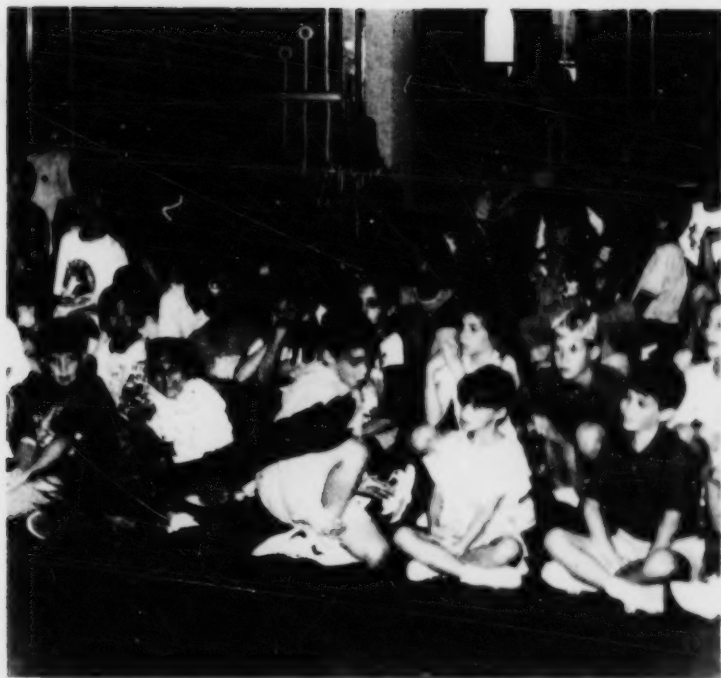
The STRIDE card, issued twice each quarter, is monitored daily by an advisor to recognize student success and provide early intervention when mistakes are made. Mistakes, or "demerits," lead to progressive interventions based on predetermined consequences.

Effective communication is a key ingredient and includes written notices, telephone calls, and discussions with a guidance counselor. Interactive group activities are scheduled twice per week to enhance rapport and positive relationships between students and their advisor. Topics include goal setting, friendship, school pride, and conflict resolution.

Benefits

These systematic and progressive measures allow students to start over each quarter with new goals. Annual data indicate that over 93% qualify for incentives. Project STRIDE has resulted in many forms of excellence and represents one of the many ways we live our motto: "Together We Make a Difference."

Kristine A. Servais
Bay View Middle School
Green Bay, WI



Nature comes to school.



Encouraging Lifelong Learning

All children live as scientists," noted one principal of a Blue Ribbon School, "born with the capacity to ask 'Why?'" The best schools nurture children's natural inquisitiveness and then help them realize that learning doesn't stop when the bell rings at 3:30 p.m. (or when they graduate from high school).

Blue Ribbon Schools encourage children to become lifelong learners. They challenge children's creativity, help them learn how to set goals, and, most of all, give them the skills that will enable them to continue their intellectual development long after their formal schooling has ended.

Programs described in this chapter include a city garden that teaches children everything from horticulture to history; special interest clubs that involve students in everything from Hawaiian dance to computers; and an arts academy that involves all students in creating beautiful music. These are not only inspiring programs, but they are also inspiring children to continue learning throughout their lives.

Explorations

Description

Students arrive at our facility from all over the world. They come from different cultures, speak many languages,

and represent a multitude of strengths. In order to provide a thinking- and meaning-centered curriculum that suits this diversity, we have developed "Explorations" around themes such as "Colonial Days" and "Ancient Egypt." Students engage in a wide variety of integrated curriculum projects, the basis of which respects multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy.

During Explorations, students might make butter, publish a newspaper, or invent a game using information from the unit. Studies involving writing, creating, building, and drawing give each child an opportunity to express individuality and expand thinking. This results in learning across the curriculum by enthusiastic students who are able to integrate math, science, and social science, as well as language, performing, and fine arts.

Benefits

In our program, learning becomes an enjoyable task and children reflect a sense of pride in their work. High achievers challenge themselves to go beyond the assignment, whereas those who are struggling can choose an activity that is more comfortable. Our explorers also begin to relate to the themes by truly understanding what a certain civilization underwent in a particular time period.

Participants feel they have accomplished something wonderful. Together we are living our vision: "Reflect the Past, Explore the Present, and Invent the Future."

Dr. Bonita Drolet, Principal
Bryant Ranch Elementary School
Yorba Linda, CA

Experiential Learning

Description

One of the more unique aspects of our curriculum plays an important role in heightening students' interest in learn-

ing. In March, after the end of the winter trimester and before spring break, each member of the entire school takes part in one of about 20 possible nontraditional activities. Groups of from 4 to 30 students join with from one to four teachers in a week of intensive topical study. Students choose their topics, with the upper classes getting preference if there are more requests than slots available.

Many of the groups travel in pursuit of their subject matter, either for day trips or for the whole week. Projects range from going to examine the environment in a tropical rain forest, to talking to historians about the American Revolution, to practicing woodworking or culinary arts right on campus.

Faculty members are challenged to use special skills and knowledge in creating these interdisciplinary programs. Students are expected to do some writing, often in the form of a journal, and are usually evaluated on their enthusiasm and commitment to making the group adventure a positive one. Their experiences may be later incorporated into the regular curriculum.

Benefits

Our experiential program allows for team teaching and in-depth study that might not otherwise be covered by a school's curriculum. Furthermore, teachers are able to enthusiastically pursue new interests and become good models of lifelong learning. Students are encouraged to make connections between fields of study and develop relationships with others outside the traditional classroom. They are able to concentrate on favorite interests without fear of formal evaluation and thus are given a chance to see learning as a pleasurable experience.

Thomas F. Army, Jr., Headmaster
The Rectory School, Inc.
Pomfret, CT

Special Interest Clubs

Description

As the school day or year ends, our students are still eager to explore new academic or extracurricular horizons. We have established several before-school, after-school, and summer special-interest clubs for these enthusiastic, self-motivated learners. Kindergarten through fifth-grade students participate in hands-on science projects, enjoy sculpting, expand their use of computer technology, experience Hawaiian dance and culture, learn to speak French or Spanish, join an Odyssey of the Mind team, try organic gardening, stock and operate a school store, practice the art of creative writing, play the piano, or engage in sports and physical fitness activities. Over 90% of our student body choose to extend their education in this way.

Children make connections with community members, parents, and teachers who offer their time and expertise as club leaders. Each year, additional clubs are added as interests change and new resources become available. Many programs must be offered several times a week in order to accommodate all who are interested. As the programs expand, our students diversify and gain new skills in this low-key yet stimulating school setting.

Benefits

The after-school clubs appeal to students' natural curiosity. School becomes an inviting place where everyone feels welcome to interact with their neighbors and journey into the world of lifelong learning. We believe this is an ideal alternative to watching television, playing video games, or spending after-school hours with nonparental care providers.

Carol A. Hilleary, Principal
Riderwood Elementary School
Baltimore, MD

Options

The last period (4 out of every 6 days) at our school is devoted to the "Options" program. These classes are not activity periods, but they are an integral part of the school day. Courses in physical education, critical and creative thinking, study skills, visual and performing arts, technology, foreign languages, science and mathematics, life skills, literature, writing, and social sciences are offered in each cycle. The exposure to subjects ranging from chess to court sports, computer graphics to eggery, truly expands children's horizons.

Thirty to 40 different choices are available during each 8- to 10-week cycle, with every child taking one course per cycle. In addition, consideration is given to parents' requests for options that are specifically designed to enrich Grade 3-6 students who show strength in a given area.

Benefits

Aesthetic talents, academic needs, and giftedness are addressed through Options. Children are taught to make choices and take risks in a nonthreatening and relaxed atmosphere. Lifelong interests, hobbies, and careers have been developed as the result of participation in this program. As a result, all children shine, each in his or her own special way.

Mary Ann Joyce, Principal
Horizons-on-the-Hudson Magnet School
Newburgh, NY

Talents Unlimited

Description

The value of preparing children as lifelong learners made the leap from theory to action at our school with the adoption of "Talents Unlimited." Grade K-8 students are encouraged

to expand their innate abilities by learning to think productively; make accountable decisions; create a plan; and forecast, interpret, and express their ideas—life skills they can rely on in a continuously changing world.

Of 2,500 schools using this model first developed by Dr. Carol Schlichter (University of Alabama), we are one of 13 campuses identified as a demonstration site. Based on the multiple-talents research of Dr. Calvin W. Taylor, Talents Unlimited integrates thinking processes into every subject: Science students reflect and describe in paragraphs their approach to experiments; primary students use a graphic over and over to discover the varied and unusual stories they can create from one visual prompt. Children become owners of their own learning as they explore the “how” of thinking and enhance their own gifts.

Benefits

After students have been immersed in the Talents approach for 3 years, we find that they challenge ideas in a constructive manner and exhibit a sense of confidence in their abilities to systematically attack problems. They also view learning as an ongoing and exciting process.

Everyone is involved—the gifted as well as those struggling to learn. Talents also brings together the entire staff as a team, along with parents, through regular workshops and updates.

Jane S. Welling, Principal
St. Mary School
Cincinnati, OH

Geography Comes to Life

Description

Our sixth graders discover the world as a whole by studying and drawing shapes and sizes of continents and oceans

in relation to each other. At the close of the first semester, all students are able to construct a map of the earth from memory with at least 85 important sites located and identified. Maps are laminated and exhibited at school and then framed for admiring parents.

Second semester, each student chooses a country and researches its customs, culture, history, natural resources, and geography. On United Nations Day, these countries are represented in a parade and celebrated with costumes, flags, and food samples. After the parade, each student debates his or her country's point of view regarding an issue of global significance at the mock U.N. General Assembly in the gym. Parents host an international luncheon followed by a special dismissal assembly emphasizing awareness for international peace.

Benefits

Our sixth graders learn to respect various cultures and understand the world as a whole before beginning intensive study of single nations in seventh and eighth grades. They enjoy active participation in the curriculum and retain geographical information well, according to National Geographic competitions.

Sister Mary Clare Buthod, OSB, Director
Monte Cassino School
Tulsa, OK

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Description

There was a time when most city kids had relatives or friends they could visit on a farm. Children today rarely have that opportunity, but we are fortunate to have a non-working farm nearby to provide our fifth graders with an active experience as gardeners and farmers. This property

provides the perfect area for them to dig in the soil, plant seeds, and harvest their crops.

Armed with tools, the students and teachers head for the farm each spring to plant a garden. They work together for a half day every week, repairing tools, mending fences, and getting a firsthand idea of what life was like for our ancestors. In turn, the children grow in some of the most basic down-to-earth understandings of life.

Pete, a retired neighbor of the school who grew up on a farm, is our resident volunteer. He not only provides us with turn-of-the-century tools to use, but he is with us to supervise, tell tales (some "tall"), and teach us how to make soap, candles, apple butter, and even slingshots. On Thursdays during the summer, Pete and a teacher meet children at the farm who wish to tend the garden. These students can take home and enjoy the fruits of their labors—everything from okra and corn to melons and tomatoes.

Benefits

The garden provides opportunities for active learning across the curriculum. Math and measurement are used in preparing the rows and repairing fences, science is incorporated into the study of plant roots, and history is learned as students study their own roots. Children read, experiment, use critical thinking skills, and cooperate in their work.

Schoolwide involvement is promoted at all grade levels during scarecrow construction prior to spring planting. Scarecrows judged to be the best are actually used on the farm. This creates interest for the younger students, and "mini" vegetable and flower gardens spring up all around the school.

Students also have opportunities for input and decision making. They take on such tasks as building a chicken house, raising chickens, and gathering eggs. As our children grow in understanding, their harvest will be a love of learning that lasts a lifetime.

Mary Uchytel, Principal
Big Ridge Elementary School
Chattanooga, TN

Chicken and Egg Corporation

Description

Children begin life as scientists, born with the capacity to ask "Why?" At our school, we nurture innate curiosity through a science curriculum that explores the world in a very real way. Our curriculum combines horticulture (we garden in a greenhouse and outdoors), experiences with the natural world (a nature trail leads down to the creek), and a special project in animal husbandry (students tend chickens and a calf, goat, and pig).

Third graders study wild birds found around the school as well as the domestic chicken's egg, embryo, and chick development. Chicks are ordered or incubated, graphed for growth, and lovingly hovered over by interested students. By the time their fourth grade begins, the children's chicks are producing eggs. These "senior" students have organized a business, taking part in animal care crews, feeding, gathering, cleaning, and selling eggs. In addition, elected officers conduct regular business meetings. Through this personalized approach, we hope to instill in students a sense of self that engenders personal responsibility and a love of learning.

Benefits

Our fourth graders grow in responsibility as they care for the "Lamplighter Layers, Inc.," flock. Corporate stock purchases and banking profits from the sale of eggs sharpen math skills and provide an introduction to the economics of a business operation. Political awareness comes during the campaign for office holders: Convincing your peers that you are best for the job is a real-life skill. In addition, proper parliamentary procedures are followed at weekly business meetings. But if you ask any fourth grader, the most fun and excitement comes in finding the first egg!

Pat Mattingly, Director
The Lamplighter School
Dallas, TX

Bluebonnet Café

Description

The "Bluebonnet Café" is an integrated curriculum project offering hands-on, real-world experience in academic and social skills, planning, and problem solving. A wide variety of customers, including the mayor, superintendent, and family members, enjoy brunch pastries and daily home-made specials in a charming Texas atmosphere.

The entire school community works to make the student-operated café a success. Parents serve on committees to organize, decorate, collect donated and loaned necessities, and even create uniforms and items for the gift shop. Business and community leaders support the café through their expertise, donations, and patronage. Students are employed as waiters, hosts, cashiers, maitres d', kitchen helpers, bookkeepers, and clerks.

Café experiences give students a way to apply classroom lessons. For example, speech and English-as-a-Second-Language students strengthen communication skills in this unique setting. Special education students come to the café to practice social skills in a public atmosphere. All ingredients combine to create a delicious learning experience.

Benefits

In the planning and operation of the Bluebonnet Café, students have in-depth experiences with the American economic system and with the routines of a restaurant. They develop higher level math, problem-solving, and social and organizational skills. This highly motivational experience fosters enthusiasm and leads students to increased sensitivity toward the needs and desires of others. Through networking with parents and community, our children soon realize the value of cooperation. They also learn to appreciate the connection between hard work and success.

Eddie Lou Taylor, Principal
E. L. Kent Elementary School
Carrollton, TX

School of the Arts

Description

In addition to traditional classroom offerings of art, music, and chorus, the "School of the Arts" provides students with opportunities to pursue special interests and develop talents throughout their school years. Private lessons are given before school, during school (in a physical education period), after school, evenings, weekends, and during the summer. All orchestra and band instruments are taught as well as piano, harp, and guitar. The faculty, consisting of 14 musicians, represents the finest professionals in the city. Best of all, this curriculum is open to the community.

The lower school has a string ensemble, a harp ensemble, and a band that meet during the school day. In addition, dance lessons are available to both students and adults. Pottery, visual arts, group music, and drama classes are on the agenda after school or on Saturday mornings. Many of the programs result in performances at school as well as in the community.

Benefits

Parents like the convenience of having their children take arts lessons at school. The music director administers this program, which makes it relatively inexpensive to operate.

Over 50% of the students participate in the School of the Arts. The many performances and recitals build students' self-confidence. Moreover, by emphasizing the importance of educating the whole person, our school has proven that studying the arts in depth can provide a source of comfort, satisfaction, and enjoyment for all, both during the learning process and throughout life.

Dr. Rachel C. Hopkins, Director
Norfolk Academy, Lower School
Norfolk, VA

Chit Chat Club

Description

When you go to the "Chit Chat Club," words come to life. This project is designed to help students improve their everyday speech and communication through improved creativity, spelling skills, and syntax.

The activity involves teachers, students, and parents. Vocabulary words selected by teachers are posted in each room. Children are given the option of drawing a picture to illustrate the meaning, writing the meaning, or using the word correctly in a sentence.

Weekly winners, judged by a committee of teachers, become members of the club and receive small incentives. Realizing the importance of being globally competitive, the Chit Chat Club plans to become bilingual by introducing Spanish words.

Benefits

Creative writing, critical thinking skills, artistic expression, and reference skills are enhanced by the activities of the Chit Chat Club. Students are expected to use correct grammar in addition to standard spellings and punctuation in all Chit Chat sentences. By paying special attention to their usable vocabulary and the meaning of language, our children are making words a part of their lives.

Frank D. Devono, Principal
West Milford Elementary School
West Milford, WV



Learning's fun for parents too!



Involving Parents

Between birth and age 18, children spend 91% of their time outside schools. Clearly, schools cannot be successful without the active support of the home. Parent involvement is now recognized as such an important component of education that it has recently been added to the National Education Goals.

Anne C. Henderson has been examining the impact of parent involvement on education for nearly 20 years. She observes, "The evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life."

Principals of Blue Ribbon Schools are reaching out to involve parents more directly in their children's education. Programs described in this chapter include a series of workshops to introduce parents to what their children are learning in school; the story of a group of parent volunteers who made history come alive for middle school students; and a variety of ways to keep parents informed of their child's progress and activities in school.

Mandatory Volunteers

Description

Our school initiated a "mandatory service" component of an already existing "Parent Participation Program" in an effort to increase parent involvement and accountability.

Each family is responsible for 20 hours of service each year or the dollar equivalent of \$10 per hour.

The Home-School Board provides coordinators of the volunteers. Before the opening of school, they send every family a letter and "coupon booklet" describing all available service options. Parents use the "coupons" to indicate how they plan to participate. They are requested to quickly return these sign-up forms so that information and schedules can be in place by the end of the first school week.

Parents are also given a wallet-sized card to use in tallying and signing off on completed hours. Volunteers keep track of the hours on a computer, and periodic "service report cards" are given along with student grades.

Benefits

Despite some fears that such a program might undermine the spirit of generosity animating volunteerism, we have received enthusiastic response on the part of all. Our "regular" volunteers have new life because suddenly they have many helpers. A sense of appreciation has replaced the "cliquishness" that sometimes creeps into volunteer groups.

At the different planning meetings and activities, there is now a focus on pride, ownership, and community. Most gratifying is the fact that students are catching the spirit and organizing their own service projects.

Sister Rita J. Murphy, IHM, Principal
St. Rose of Lima School
Miami Shores, FL

The A-Team

Description

Our school thought of a way to help children needing extra adult time. We formed a tutoring corps of parents called the "A-Team" because they hope to accelerate each and every child to grade-level status.

Any child not passing language art or math assessments is paired with a parent who works exclusively with that child 2 or 3 times weekly. Coordination with the teacher's program is crucial to maintain the identified needs of a student. This year 28 children participated.

During a parent inservice session, folders are set up for each child with a communication log for the teacher to show what is needed each week—sometimes a drill on math facts or perhaps oral reading. The A-Team coach reports on what is accomplished. Additional activities include computerized lessons, games, and journal writing, with both teacher and coach deciding what is to be used for each session.

Benefits

Although this program is only one aspect of our total staff commitment, every child passed the summative math assessment this fall at or above grade level. But, beyond academic success, the self-concepts of these children have been tremendously enhanced. Many have found a significant adult who cares about their success.

H. Peter Storm, Principal
Yellow Springs Elementary School
Frederick, MD

A Blast Through the '60s

Descriptions

Our Parent Advisor Group decided to utilize a half-day instructional workshop to present an educational program for students. They wanted to do something special and different—something that teachers wouldn't have time to do. After brainstorming lots of possibilities, the group decided that because most of them grew up in the '60s, they would teach what life was like for them. Thus "A Blast Through the '60s" was born. Months of planning, hard work, considerable reminiscing, and many laughs resulted in a wonderful day for students, staff, and parents.

Our 600 students were prescheduled for six sessions lasting 30 minutes each. Based on seven topics—sports, history, fashion, science, real life, art, and music—19 individual sessions were developed. A sampling of miniclasses follows: a former POW, a speaker about JFK, a video of the first moon landing, egg-drop packaging for space travel, Martin Luther King Jr., bandstand dances, a day at the ball park, a drive-in, fashion in review, and music trivia. Most students, staff, and parents came dressed for the '60s, anticipating a day filled with hilarity and learning.

Benefits

First and foremost, everyone had fun! A frequent comment on campus was, "I wish I had grown up in the '60s."

Additionally, the staff gained a greater respect for our parent group. We hosted an appreciation lunch, awarding parents with much-deserved kudos. As a result, parents felt super, and new adult friendships flourished. In reality, a true partnership was born.

Marna L. Beard and Joseph G. Galatioto, Co-Principals
L'Anse Creuse Middle School—Central
Harrison Township, MI

Parent Partnership

Description

The most significant way to enhance the quality of school life beyond a strong academic program is through the use of parent resources. First, to strengthen communication, we use "Parent Notes"—informative, readable, and well illustrated—that go home every Tuesday without fail. These are supplemented by frequent classroom newsletters and "Teacher Talk" to keep parents up to date.

Next, we encourage parents to be active in a parent-teacher group that organizes fundraising, speakers on par-

enting, and student enrichment programs. We put out the message, "If you can give us a few minutes, we can use your help." There's nothing like a cordial welcoming atmosphere to establish rapport between parents and school staff.

Even grandparents and neighbors get involved in such activities as setting up art materials, accompanying field trips, doing word processing, offering hospitality, phone calling, and providing classroom funds for "extras." On the social side, the parent-teacher group hosts staff luncheons, monthly morning "Teacher Treats," and staff birthday celebrations. Finally, parents are invited into the classrooms where grateful teachers share with them those "1,001 Things to Do."

Benefits

Our parents and teachers are building bridges of co-operation that ultimately lead to a sense of school community. In this age of changing family styles, an effective partnership with parents will result only after bonds of trust and shared concern have been established. A student-centered program is the result when all concerned start by saying, "Hi. It's nice to see you!" and eventually, "How can I help?"

Donald C. Ancypa, Principal
St. Joan of Arc School
St. Clair Shores, MI

Decision-Making Parents

Description

We promote parent input in decision making as part of a schoolwide team effort. Parents actively participate on every committee and have an equal voice with other members—teachers, staff, and administrators. The core of our collaboration with parents is the Building Council, an elected leadership group. This body meets biweekly and consists of

the principal, an instructional assistant, five staff members, and two parents.

The staff members on the Council also liaison with the grade levels, certain specialists, and other committees. Council parents automatically become the president and president-elect of the Parent-Teacher Service Organization (PTSO), serving for 2 years each. Additional building committees are coordinated by the Council and deal with such areas as school pride and social activities, staff development, curriculum, fine arts, and multicultural/gender-fair/disability-awareness issues.

Benefits

We have discovered that our school community working together creates a force greater than the sum of its parts. This synergy enables significant positive change perhaps not otherwise possible. Parents are excited to be on committees as a part of the decision-making process. By being involved at this level, they are more willing to take on fundraising and other tasks so vital to the school.

Mary H. Hertogs, Principal
H. O. Sonnesyn Elementary School
New Hope, MN

Resources for Parents

Description

An innovative program at our school can easily be duplicated by others. When teachers observed that parents had more questions regarding their children than they could answer, they conducted a survey to identify family needs. This subsequently led to the award of a state incentive grant used for a series of parenting workshops and the acquisition of numerous resources, now housed within the school library.

The programs for parents are specifically matched to their concerns and include such topics as "Reading Skills" and "The Homework Hassle." In one session, for example, a psychologist suggested how parents, rather than children, could be in charge.

Grant monies have helped purchase books, audio- and videotapes, supplies, and electronic equipment. The school library has also provided comfortable chairs and tables plus funds for acquisitions. We are pleased to report that this program, along with funding for additions to the parent library, is being continued by our Parent-Teacher Association.

Benefits

As a result of our parent-teacher collaboration, parents are communicating with each other and the staff more openly. They express feeling more comfortable in asking teachers to provide input and resources and have themselves become an exciting part of school planning.

In addition, working parents find driving time an excellent opportunity to listen to child development audiotapes. The students, best of all, are reaping the benefits from parents who have readily available information to address individual needs.

Dr. Patricia A. Schumacher, Principal
William Southern Elementary School
Independence, MO

Evenings for Families

Description

Preregistered families attend "Evenings for Families" where they sample hands-on academic and arts curricula. Through these experiences, parents and children explore both content and interpersonal skills.

During six 2-hour sessions on "Family Math" and "Family Science" evenings, they first work independently on discovery activities and then are guided through interactive problem-solving exercises using teacher-made kits. "Family Computing" has a similar format in which parents investigate computer skills plus the ways their children think and compute.

"Family Art" meets on three occasions each year for two distinctly different activities—a weekend gallery visit and an art-making session at school. During the hands-on evenings, parents seem to have a great time creating with their children as they observe ways to use materials for both self-expression and skill development. In addition, they make wonderful displays for our school.

This year we are expanding the Evenings to include an intergenerational family theater experience. Performing a play and attending a professional production are featured as the culminating activities.

Benefits

All of our family programs foster a cooperative environment between school and home. They expose parents to current educational strategies and new curricular ideas. This exposure creates understanding and confidence on the part of parents while it helps them to recognize the abilities of their children. Positive parent-child relationships develop in an atmosphere of instruction and fun. As a result, technical fields and the arts become more accessible to all.

Senta F. Stich, Principal
Daniel Webster Magnet School
New Rochelle, NY

Mother's Day Breakfast

Description

The annual "Mother's Day Breakfast" was begun as a way to get fathers more involved in the Parents and Teachers for Students Organization. For years, mothers had helped mostly with our successful "Spaghetti Dinner."

Finally, some of our members challenged me to get dads involved! On Mother's Day last spring, 38 dads prepared and served breakfast to over 350 moms and children. Of course, the students really felt special being able to treat their moms this way.

Benefits

We were thrilled to get such a large number of fathers actively involved in our event. The children felt extremely proud as they arrived with their moms.

Each student received free tickets to the breakfast. As with many of our activities, this was not designed as a fund-raiser but as a means to make school more of an extended family.

Charles S. Wayes, Principal
Marlborough Elementary School
Green Lane, PA

Commitment to Communication

Description

We open the lines of communication with parents early in the school year. Phone calls to families are made during the first weeks of September just to say "hello" and address early questions and concerns.

Parents are also invited to attend quarterly grade-level meetings with teachers and the principal to discuss curriculum, classroom procedures, and ways to work together to enhance student learning. During the last such meeting each June, teachers meet with parents of the next year's incoming students. During this exchange, mothers and fathers receive handouts and a suggested summer skills review. They also get a list of materials and supplies that will ease their child's transition to the next grade.

Benefits

Parents appreciate early contact with the next grade teacher. Teachers take the time to deliver a positive message about their program, expectations, and themselves. We believe that everyone benefits from these early get-acquainted experiences.

Nancy A. Bobkoskie, Principal
Crooked Billet Elementary School
Hatboro, PA

Titles for Tomorrow

Description

The "Titles for Tomorrow" book donation program, initiated at the suggestion of a parent, is administered by the Parent Teacher Association. Titles are given to the school library "in memory of" or "in honor of" teachers, students, or whomever a contributor designates. For a minimum gift of \$12, donors may specify the type and/or grade level of their gift, which is purchased from a local bookstore.

A bookplate listing the donor, honoree, and occasion (Christmas, Hanukkah, end-of-school, birthday) is placed inside each book. In addition, the PTA sends a special notice to both the person who made the honorarium and the individual being honored informing them of the book's title.

The program has grown rapidly; in fact, 34 books were donated during the first year, 62 the second year, and 143 in the third. To date, 435 volumes have been added to our school library because of this project.

Benefits

Titles for Tomorrow has helped us achieve three school goals: increasing academic achievement, parental involvement, and the number and quality of books in the library. This creative approach has made new, exciting materials accessible to students when they are needed. Furthermore, it generates interest in reading and, subsequently, an increase in test scores. By the way, we have also noticed a marked growth in the number of parents volunteering to read to children.

Dr. Joyce Jensen, Principal
Richland Elementary School
Memphis, TN



School pride: spreading the word.



Marketing Your School

Until recently, most schools didn't have a marketing philosophy. If they had, it probably would have been borrowed from a line in the movie *Field of Dreams*: "If you build it, they will come."

But today, marketing is becoming an essential part of every school's job. In many communities, more than 70% of residents have no school-age children. Those that do often have the ability to send their children to the school they believe will best meet their needs.

Blue Ribbon Schools recognize that the best marketing efforts involve two-way communication. They know that, as one principal described it, "Staff members, students, parents, and the wider community working together create a team that is greater than the sum of its parts."

One of the schools in this chapter has the first low-wattage radio station in the country to broadcast from an elementary school. Another group of students quite literally wrote the book about what was best about their school. All the programs demonstrate that "marketing" can also mean "building relationships."

Sold on Radio

Description

We have the first low-wattage radio station in the country to be broadcast from an elementary school. Run by students

for students, this station has a signal radius of about two miles. Three times a day during school hours, we can tune in to continuous messages or classical music. Current features include school, community, and national news; weather; the daily Pledge of Allegiance; sports; story reading and poetry; the lunch menu; a citizenship program; messages from the principal; advertisements; and a weekly parent program.

This idea came after a brainstorming session with our business partners who subsequently underwrote the project. The students, with help from families and school faculty and staff, sell advertisements to pay back the business partners.

Benefits

Students are effectively marketing our school with the new radio station. We are all kept well informed about campus and community activities. Job skills are taught to 5th-grade students who are trained by another local radio station. The children interview for and hold positions as general, sales, and office managers as well as program directors. With the help of adults in the school community, they are using and improving basic academic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and math in the ownership and operation of our successful station.

Ken Krumwiede, Principal
Garfield Elementary School
Davenport, IA

The Best Book

Preparing for the 2-day site visit from the U.S. Department of Education was an exciting adventure for our school. We wanted every possible person to be involved in the process, especially students. Because we have a strong whole-language program where teachers encourage students to

make their own books, the idea of a schoolwide "big book" evolved.

Using the patterning technique, we created a book after reading the popular children's literature piece, *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown. Each class or special group contributed a page which began with "The best thing about our school is . . ." Students illustrated their own topics, such as "School Carnival," "Chapter 1," "Adventure Club," and "Cooperative Learning."

The last page reads, "The best thing about school is US," and it displays a photograph of all students and staff in front of our building. The site visitor had an opportunity to see The Best Book, which gives a perspective of who we are through words and pictures of children that strongly verify our original application.

Benefits

We now have an excellent resource available in the Parent Resource Center for all families. The school counselor utilizes the book when working with new student orientation groups. The librarian and teachers can share The Best Book with future classes as an example of writing using patterning techniques and at the same time reinforce what our school has to offer. Students take much pride in the final product and truly feel they helped prepare for the site visit.

Margaret R. Lucero, Principal
Ballwin Elementary School
Ballwin, MO

A Visible Community

Description

Marketing a small regional elementary school on an extremely low budget is given a boost once administration and staff members determine exactly what is to be promoted. We

decided to "restore ownership" to parents and staff and "create a vibrant, visible community" during a time when we had been amalgamated with a group of other private schools.

We focused our attention on developing a Fine Arts program that would help create a confident and articulate student body. Subsequent marketing activities were aimed at utilizing public media such as cable television, public service announcements, appearances at political forums, and local holiday events such as parades.

By commissioning our school community to go out to tell its story, we have activated a secret ingredient for success. "Rewards" of caps, shirts, bags, and other promotional materials, always featuring the name of the school in large print, go a long way toward keeping us in the minds of potential students and supporters. Still, nothing is as powerful as the spoken testimony of happy and involved participants.

Benefits

Since we invited our educational constituency to build its own field of dreams, enrollment in Grades K-8 has gone from 129 to 265 students. The public perception of the school is evident through our exposure in the local media. We are known as being "alive" and as having an excellent learning environment.

Our increased visibility has led to easier fund-raising and thus contributed to the total renovation of the building interior over the past 5 years. Perhaps the greatest bonus of our effort is that the school as a whole reaps a sense of pride in all that can be accomplished and, at the same time, individuals each feel uniquely responsible for its success.

Sister Kathryn Schlueter, CSJ, Principal
Our Lady of the Hamptons Regional Catholic School
Southampton, NY

Multifunctional Handbook

Description

Our school "Handbook" is a dynamic document with multiple benefits. It serves to explain and describe school philosophy, programs, and policies necessary to implement our nontraditional environment. We provide this book to those interested in the educational processes we envision—academic, emotional, social, and spiritual.

Parents receive the handbook at the beginning of the school year. It is especially useful for orienting new registrants or when introducing potential students to our community. As a marketing tool for conferences and meetings, it effectively acquaints others with the broader influence of our organization.

The handbook is reprinted each year to allow clarification of policies along with the addition of a new theme and symbol. Thematic artwork and poetry created by students enhance the volume throughout and, in particular, accompany the pages of the school calendar.

Benefits

The handbook is an inclusive document for those who would support the school's vision into the year 2000. For parents, it outlines step-by-step processes to achieve our goals, and for students it represents a challenge to create.

As an introductory marketing instrument, the handbook offers realistic expectations for new families and students considering our school. This is evidenced by the dramatic increase in enrollment in the past 5 years. Additionally, the community at large now better understands our school and continues to offer its encouragement and support.

Sister Jeannette Daily, Principal
Our Lady Star of the Sea School
Cape May, NJ

Celebrating Your History

Description

Last year marked our school's 70th year of operation. Students, teachers, and parents celebrated with a large birthday party on the first day of school. We enjoyed ice cream and cake, balloons, a visit from the Mayor, and live television coverage.

In October, the PTA hosted an anniversary get-together with former students from as far back as the '20s, historical displays, a musical program and slide show, speeches, building improvements, and the unveiling of a 93-page book about the history of the school.

To preserve the memories that we collected, a dim corner at the end of a hall has been transformed with a well-lit display cabinet surrounded by brightly colored walls. This "Memory Lane" is used for the exhibition of old pictures, newspaper clippings, sweatshirts, PTA minutes, and other memorabilia that can now be viewed by generations of parents and students to come.

Benefits

We all felt pride in our school at the "Anniversary Celebration." Volunteers worked countless hours to improve the facilities and grounds, and local businesses displayed "Happy Birthday" messages on their marquees. It was difficult to tell who was more excited—alumni coming back to visit former classrooms or teachers seeing former pupils. Students, however, gained the most as they listened to school history facts each morning on the local news station, participated in writing and art projects on schools of the past and future, and realized that they too were becoming a part of our history.

Sandra Welch, Principal
Augusta Circle Elementary School
Greenville, SC

Making Things Happen

Description

Gaining support from the administration, school board, and community to increase your school's ability to make good instructional use of technology can be more easily accomplished by showcasing your best efforts. For example, if others at a school board meeting see and understand your technology program, they become interested in accommodating your needs.

When our school attended a board meeting, we took along our "Techsperts"—students who work with the librarian at recess or during computer club to learn new skills. Techsperts assist others on campus during the day and help with "Family Technology Nights." Introducing them, after they led the Pledge, afforded the opportunity to mention these activities.

Next, we presented a 13-minute video of students working on projects and creating multimedia designs, including brief excerpts from their creations. A portfolio of student work was also provided for each board member and the superintendent. Several teachers, parents, and a student then spoke about our programs, enthusiasm, and many needs. The board and audience were very receptive.

Benefits

Educators constantly confront many immediate tasks. Steven Covey wrote, "We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen." Our presentation clearly demonstrated our commitment to technology and the wise use of our resources. Immediate benefits of our presentation included a discussion with the superintendent on technical support and approval of a payroll-deduction, home-computer buy program. Indirectly, we are confident that our needs are more likely to be understood in the future.

Kathy Caraway, Principal
North Oaks Elementary School
Austin, TX



Lending a pair of helping hands.



Creating a Community of Learning

If, as the African proverb holds, it takes an entire village to raise a child, then schools cannot function in isolation. "At a time when many families across all income levels are experiencing greater stress, and when child poverty is at record levels," the Business Roundtable recently noted, "the school cannot view itself as an isolated institution within the community, separate from family and community services."

Blue Ribbon Schools have reached out. In these exemplary schools, the community becomes part of the classroom and, in turn, students become part of the community.

In one of the programs described in this chapter, students and staff members volunteer with elderly and terminally ill patients. In another, a day-long festival helps students travel back in time as they visit with exhibitors including weavers, potters, blacksmiths, and even candlestick makers. For these schools, the community is a vital link in the learning process.

Cadet Teachers

Description

Eighth-grade students interested in working in the educational field may become cadet teachers if they apply, interview, and are selected to assist our elementary teachers and

students. If chosen, they earn class credit and receive a grade for their participation. Before they begin their assignments, cadets are trained to work with younger children by the middle school counselor, the elementary principal, and the "cooperating teacher."

Cadets get experience teaching in a variety of duties, such as tutoring individuals or small groups. Sometimes they assist with art and cooking projects or just listen to a child read a story, or they may grade papers and put up a bulletin board.

A daily log outlines specific jobs completed. The cooperating teacher conducts a midterm and quarterly evaluation to give cadets feedback and input for grading.

Benefits

Younger students, receiving such special care, look up to cadet teachers as role models. In fact, self-confidence and self-esteem blossom for both groups. The internship is a valuable education for students and a daily boon for teachers. Best of all, it has helped form a partnership between the two schools.

Renate Krompasky, Principal
Centennial Elementary School
Tucson, AZ

Shared Decision Making

Description

We have created a community of learning with a team approach to decision making. Shared leadership within a Total Quality Management (TQM) framework enables all members of our community to be intimately involved with every aspect of school life.

At regular site-based meetings, key quality indicators are used as benchmarks toward which we continuously strive. Through extensive data collection, we are able to specifically determine perceptions of our strengths and areas of relative weakness. The data, along with research and ongoing assessment, lead us to form specific missions for problem-solving and planning teams. The teams encourage a diversity of membership based on the type of mission. Using TQM processes, teams work until a solution to a problem is implemented and adequately monitored.

Although all staff has had some TQM training, seven members (and four parents) have had extensive training and serve as "chauffeurs," driving each team safely through our meetings. Together, the principal and the Quality Council have established a quality instructional vision for our school based on a common core of beliefs.

Benefits

We have had enhanced communication and understanding at all levels. Everyone has input; our needs are based on "real data," and the results are dramatic!

Test scores have improved because we have been able to find the "root causes" of problems; innovative programs have been launched as a result of identifying "customer needs." Even our Parent Teacher Organization has recently revised its by-laws and constitution to reflect TQM methods.

Though our process is lengthy and time consuming, our decisions truly address real problems—not theory—and they are long lasting.

Cheryl R. Dwyer, Principal
Mitchell Elementary School
Woodbury, CT

Learning Villages

Description

At our school, we have pre-K, kindergarten, and third through fifth grades; there are no first or second grades due to a federal desegregation measure passed in 1972. Recently, we established "Learning Villages" to create a more cohesive school community. Students were arranged into four groups, promoting both vertical and horizontal articulation throughout the school.

Learning Villages have become cohesive multiage "teams" that reinforce themes, instruction, and the goal of achievement across all disciplines. They are like a school-within-a-school that allows intensive instruction in an intimate, nurturing environment. Regularly scheduled village meetings are held at least quarterly where we all share, present, and discuss required community service projects related to the school theme, "Planet Earth."

Benefits

The hallmark of our school is cooperation by working and learning together. Students have recycled telephone books, adopted manatees, purchased acres in a Children's Rainforest, assisted a reforestation project, donated trees, and hosted an event for children affected by Hurricane Andrew. We are grateful to our parents and community members who wholeheartedly share their learning adventures.

Melanie K. Revman, Principal
Coral Gables Elementary School
Coral Gables, FL

A Business Connection

Description

We envision our school as a place where education is a treasure and children are inspired to reach for their dreams. To make our goals a reality, we have connected with 35 businesses that provide mentors, tutors, instructors, equipment, supplies, and field experiences to enrich students and challenge teachers. A Mayo Clinic dietitian, a university astronomy professor, a Navy helicopter pilot, and a Rotary Club tutor all have become partners in school excellence.

We declare the ingredients for our success to be as easy as "ABC": "Aspirations" of partners who develop and monitor action plans based on needs and resources; "Building" of knowledge and understanding through partners' service on the School Advisory Council; and "Celebration" of partnership through publications and events.

Benefits

The "Connection" is an uncompromising commitment to others. With this support, we have received in excess of \$700,000, a fully equipped math/science lab, excellent standardized test scores (math mean, 70; reading, 64), and direct linkage with higher education and the business world.

Our faculty of empowered professionals welcomes this opportunity to exchange ideas and training, participate in advanced studies, serve on university and business advisory boards, and team teach with colleagues in the community. In an ongoing, dynamic climate, we have been able to redirect instruction toward cooperative learning, higher order thinking skills, decision making, and utilization of technology—all critical for the future workforce.

Donna Snively Kellam, Principal
Alimacani Elementary School
Jacksonville, FL

Interdisciplinary Chart

Description

Our "Interdisciplinary Chart" began as an effort to communicate grade-level objectives—in reading, language arts, social studies, and science—to special area and other subject teachers. Each teacher in Grades K-8 lists one or two major goals or themes for the month; then other subject teachers try to incorporate these objectives into their lesson plans as well.

For example, if third graders study Indians in social studies, the art teacher includes Indian hieroglyphics, the music teacher demonstrates tom-tom drums, the computer teacher pulls all software dealing with Indians or early America, and the librarian highlights fiction and nonfiction books on this topic.

Benefits

The ability to communicate objectives of classroom teachers makes the interdisciplinary chart so useful. We post this tool in the faculty lounge near the coffee pot—a high-traffic area. Another chart is located in the hall to encourage parents to share their experiences and expertise. We have had, for instance, parents teach minilessons about their native land in coordination with the curriculum.

Sally McQuaid, Principal
St. John the Evangelist Catholic School
Hapeville, GA

Morning Meeting

Description

A "Morning Meeting" is held every day at our school, but each meeting is unique. This is a time for teachers, staff,

students, parents, and often, community citizens to talk about things in a nonjudgmental way.

Based on Dr. William Glasser's *Schools Without Failure*, we follow a format whereby students sit by class in a circle in the gym while faculty and others sit behind them. The principal leads from the center. We all have an opportunity to communicate and set a positive tone for the day.

The morning sessions allow a common thread to run through the school that helps tie all programs and people together. This is accomplished in a multitude of ways: 1) sharing news, thoughts, and ideas; 2) recognizing accomplishments and weekly honorees; 3) complimenting for good behavior and deeds; 4) teaching rules and self-discipline; 5) singing, laughing, reflecting, and having fun together; 6) recognizing birthdays, holidays, and newcomers; 7) allowing students chances to lead; 8) inviting community speakers; 9) providing classes an audience with whom to share; and 10) closing with a thought for the day, the Pledge of Allegiance, and an American song of the month.

Benefits

Our school is friendlier and more fun because of the special bonding that takes place during Morning Meetings. Everyone benefits from building closeness and trust, accepting and learning from mistakes, acquiring the necessary tools to become responsible and productive, observing positive models, and practicing speaking and listening skills. Our aim is to teach that we all have many options for choices in our thoughts and behaviors that give us better control over our lives.

Marian C. Arrowsmith, Principal
Woodlake Elementary School
Mandeville, LA

Celebration of Learning

Description

We have succeeded in integrating classroom learning into the home by using exciting interdisciplinary thematic units 6 different weeks a year. We describe these units ahead of time in our monthly newsletter so that families know what to expect and to enable them to participate in activities, assemblies, and field trips.

The apex of the year is a delightful "Celebration of Learning" in which class projects, art work, Foxfire projects, and dramatic productions are featured. Everyone becomes immersed in topics relating to our Great Basin ecosystem such as geology, environmental issues, cultural heritage, and economic diversification. Academic studies are integrated throughout this event.

Community members join us as Partners in Education—the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, mining and agricultural entities, businesses, and intergenerational family members. Every other year, local agencies combine forces to sponsor an experiential week during which students are bused to sites where hands-on learning activities are led by volunteers. Field trips have often had a ratio of one adult to three students because the subjects are so interesting to everyone.

Benefits

Our students are eager to explore topics in depth, such as bats, archaeology, and natural disasters. Teachers research two new areas each year and construct learning units around them. Families preview the subjects before they are introduced into the curriculum.

We have seen that this approach contributes positively toward lifelong learning. Our community has become our school. After participating in field excursions with their children, parents often return with other members of their

families, or Scout or 4-H groups, to repeat the experience. We have also noticed that many parents continue their educations at the community college level.

Virginia Bath Terry, Principal
McGill Elementary School
McGill, NV

Including the Community

Description

Our school is conveniently located on the public transit line and close to an urban center where the conservatory, museums, theaters, state buildings, and businesses are accessible. We keep informed about special events and take advantage of them. Our children attend the opera, art or exhibit openings, and meetings with legislators whenever these experiences fit into our focus of study.

Others are invited to work with us on campus. Currently, a children's theater company is in residence for 8 weeks; a children's garden is being created with the help of the state university school of architecture and local nurseries; and a nature trail is emerging with the assistance of a local grant, the labor of our Father's Association, and the machinery of local builders. In addition, community members are frequent guests in our classrooms.

These activities are not without a strong service component. Our girls may help at a local food pantry, hold a book drive for homeless children, raise funds through a walk for the wildlife center, or adopt a family at holiday time.

Benefits

We believe in making school as lifelike as possible; therefore, with each theme we undertake, we build in opportunities to do real things. Each collaboration leads to another. As

a result, children feel a part of their larger community, are developing interests and support for all it offers, and are making friends for the school.

Marilyn Parker, Director of Lower School
Columbus School for Girls
Columbus, OH

2×2×2 Program

Description

We restructured our school to allow a team of 2 teachers to stay with the same 2 classrooms for 2 years. The 2 teachers and their 44 students now have the gift of time and interconnected classrooms in order to develop a community of learners. This team practices flexible grouping, curriculum integration, portfolio assessment, parent involvement, computer instruction, cooperative learning, and teaching of social skills to ensure a positive learning culture.

Each day the teachers have common planning time to perfect strategies for both large and small group activities. The children are heterogeneously grouped without concern for their performance level, yet individual abilities and interests are met. In the end, we see students taking responsibility for their own learning plus cheering and clapping for classmates' achievements.

Benefits

When teachers, parents, and students work so closely, synergy occurs, and children's self-confidence and motivation soar. In the "2×2×2 Program," children benefit from the expertise and teaching styles of a team setting in which teachers troubleshoot and create exciting activities. There is also more time for educators to become familiar with learning styles, abilities, and interests of class members, providing continuity of care for 2 years. Management of transition

time, pretesting, review, remediation, enrichment, self-esteem activities, and curriculum consolidation is much more efficient and effective.

Budd A. Dingwall, Principal
Pepper Pike Elementary School
Pepper Pike, OH

Quantum Day

Description

"Quantum Day," a feast of experiments partially underwritten by our business partner Quantum Chemical, is the culminating scientific event of the year. Students arrange themselves into cooperative teams of four and choose, from a wide selection, four experiments in which they will take part. Each team member is responsible for one experiment, ensuring that everyone understands the process to be used.

Each experiment highlights an element of the scientific process. For example, in "Propeller Pilots" children must test their hypotheses regarding which plastic propeller will drive a balsa model the farthest or the fastest; in "Who's the Thief?" they use chromatography and carefully keep track of accumulated data to identify which pen is used on the ransom note.

Quantum Day requires substantial community involvement. Last year, 62 parents, 18 high school chemistry scholars, and 21 employees of our partner helped with the experiments. In all, there were 132 student teams conducting 528 different experiments.

Benefits

This event truly reflects our schoolwide goal of including all students in learning. We also accomplish the science curriculum goals of integration, inquiry, and choice. Furthermore, teachers are pleased to see how leading an experiment builds a positive self-image.

The Quantum employees become involved as volunteers. As a way to say "thank you" to our business partner, we offer facilities for their employee wellness program. Science comes to life when scientific theory becomes a reality. This day is viewed as uplifting, motivating, and extremely educational for all.

Peggy Phillips, Principal
Symmes Elementary School
Loveland, OH

Readers as Leaders

Description

Our seventh-grade "Readers" are leaders in a worthwhile community service project. The volunteer students are trained during the first month of school; then, once a month thereafter, a core group of 20 students visits a local nursing home to share prearranged activities with assigned patients.

Students interact with these shut-ins by reading stories, writing letters, playing cards, or simply talking. Meanwhile, a support group of 74 more children plans activities, institutes programs, and assists with the actual visits.

Student involvement takes place on their own time. Once each month from October to May, students and several sponsors travel by bus after school to attend to elderly and terminally ill people. This opportunity is described as wonderful—positively electric!

Benefits

Students in the "Readers as Leaders" program understand the need to stick to a commitment; they accept and uphold critical responsibilities, sacrificing a school activity period to extend this service.

Students seem to feel such an internal reward in giving of themselves; many continue their visitations during the sum-

mer. Teachers are gratified to observe adolescents and the aged forming a "friendship bond" beyond description.

Dr. Marcia E. Martin, Principal
Carson Middle School
Pittsburgh, PA

The Sky's the Limit

Description

The goals of the integrated curriculum seem to find their most exciting expression at the primary level. Perhaps this is true because no science or social studies texts fragment the curriculum, no bells ring to call children to other classes, and nothing else competes for time and attention. When creative professionals are thus empowered, "The Sky's the Limit"!

Our teachers have witnessed the magic of thematic units at the primary level. We brainstormed to see how this magic could be translated into a schoolwide experience. We wanted to see all students immersed in a common topic beyond the boundaries of math, art, or science. The result was the addition of an interdisciplinary unit for all classes in March of each school year.

Every day for 3 weeks, all students—K-8—are engrossed in a topic selected by faculty a year in advance to allow time to gather resources and schedule planning. To date, we have created units on Africa, Australia, Columbus, and the Renaissance. The end result is an exciting learning experience for everyone involved.

Benefits

We wanted to show students that true knowledge is not compartmentalized and, in the process, we have become true believers. Teachers reach out to find parents, civic leaders, and professionals who have expertise they are willing to

share. Our faculty is given an opportunity to translate dreams into reality as well as benefit from collegial planning.

Students are energized by the change in routine and recognize that adults also value what they are learning. Community volunteers see our school in action and grow to respect our program—a public relations bonus. This interaction within our entire school community has been most affirming and enlightening.

Margaret C. Halpin, Principal
St. Luke School
Barrington, RI

Step Into the Sunshine

Description

The success of our school is not by accident, but by design. We believe that the quality of relationships among school adults has more to do with our collective achievement than any other factor. Our staff philosophy, "Step Into the Sunshine," communicates to students, parents, and our community that all children are unconditionally accepted and challenged to move forward.

The sunflower garden in the hallway is testament to the fact that a positive environment fosters learning. This garden serves as a daily reminder that no matter what individuals bring with them to school, they will be embraced with love. We have taken what works best instructionally, have been creative in our use of available resources, and have established a solid foundation for our young students. Working in concert, our community intends to model strength, pride, and courage for these adults of the 21st century.

Benefits

The key to our children's proven achievement is not in wealth and splendor, but in the commitment by the total

staff to expect no less than the best from any student. While meeting diverse needs, we have also produced an inviting school climate that adds sunshine to children's lives.

We create traditions at school, making this a happy place to learn. An attractive child-centered environment where students know they are loved and accepted is not unlike a fairy tale story: "Once upon a time. . . . They lived happily ever after."

Cheryl B. Floyd, Principal
Lake City Primary School
Lake City, SC

Petting Zoo

Description

We are blessed with a "Petting Zoo," complete with goats, pigs, sheep, geese, ducks, chickens, quail, turkeys, rabbits, peacocks, and turtles. Our students are given opportunities to develop self-reliance and responsibility through the care and feeding of these creatures. Funding for this project has been provided by our Parent Teacher Organization and from a teacher grant.

Learning-disabled students from a self-contained class have primary responsibility for the animals and train other classes to assist them. Our zoo affords unusual observational opportunities for children to apply their math, science, writing, and reading skills. Classroom incubators allow the animals' own eggs to hatch.

Students frequently write our principal asking for permission to adopt chicks, ducks, or bunnies. Each prospective owner must submit a written plan for the care and nurturing of the adoptee. After parental approval, an adoption conference is held and a student happily takes home a new pet.

Benefits

The Petting Zoo serves as a community resource for students and families from other schools. Naturally, it generates much positive publicity.

The zoo acts as an icebreaker and conversation piece for new families. It is also a motivational tool we can use with children who are experiencing behavior problems. The self-esteem of our learning-disabled students increases as a result of their responsibility for the animals. All students at school are able to recognize, identify, and describe characteristics of the animals, which fosters better integration of science and related activities across the curriculum.

E. Eugene Sires, Principal
Summerville Elementary School
Summerville, SC

Winter Sports

Description

Each January, our kindergarten through fifth-grade students look forward to the day when they sign up for a winter sport. For the next 5 weeks, they will participate in a non-traditional setting made possible with the help of a local ski corporation, ice arena, and cross-country ski track.

Children receive 1 1/2 hours of open time once a week and are encouraged to try activities they normally wouldn't do on their own. The entire staff and many parent volunteers travel with students to their lessons and then join them for skiing or skating the rest of the day.

Benefits

Students who do not excel in academics or group activities have an opportunity to build self-esteem in a very individualized activity. Children and adults find themselves on

common ground as they learn and practice new skills together. Every year, "Winter Sports" reveals a new perspective on how to help a child who has been hard to reach. In turn, many students develop a better appreciation for teachers and parents as budding relationships and understanding flourish.

Tim Cline, Principal
Wilson Elementary School
Wilson, WY



Teachers teaching teachers.



Coordinating Effective Staff Development

From thematic teaching to math manipulatives, from full inclusion to partial immersion, today's schools are constantly changing to meet the needs of students. Keeping staff members up to date with the latest educational research requires a commitment to staff development.

School reform efforts also create a need for continuing education. For example, in the not-so-good-old-days, most teachers closed their doors in the morning and never saw another adult until the last school bus pulled out at the end of the day. Today, teachers want, and need, to plan collaboratively and to work as members of a team.

How can schools ensure that teachers receive the staff development they need and want? Blue Ribbon Schools offer some answers. Whether it's a monthly breakfast that provides informal collegial networking or an in-school teacher exchange, all the ideas in this chapter demonstrate ways that staff members can continue their own growth and development.

Teachers' Helper

Description

Finding time to effectively plan staff development is difficult at best, and almost impossible within the fast-paced

schedule of a school year. For this reason, we created a position of instructional and curriculum supervisor to facilitate meaningful staff activities at our school.

Through everyday close consultation with faculty, the supervisor targets areas best addressed by formal and informal inservice. Past sessions have focused on enrichment, study skills, attention deficit and other learning disabilities, critical thinking, classroom management, and self-esteem. Each teacher completes an annual needs assessment survey using rankings on a 1-to-10 scale.

The supervisor also works closely with faculty in all curriculum matters, reviews lesson plans, conducts teacher evaluations twice per year, and liaisons all recommendations for resource assistance, both enrichment and remedial.

Benefits

Our new supervisor has enabled the principal to easily interface with key areas of staff development. Because of this position, we also have the means to support the staff in a timely and effective manner. Items requiring further attention are identified more readily, and we have been able to respond more quickly to faculty requests for additional training.

Sister Dawn Gear, GNSH, Principal
St. John Neumann Regional Catholic School
Lilburn, GA

T.E.A.M.S.

Description

To realize collaboration and more meaningful professional development, our teachers voluntarily grouped themselves into teams of from three to five persons based on common needs and interests. These teams meet 8 half-days

throughout the school year while aides, substitutes, and parents supervise classes.

After submitting a focus-topic form prior to meetings, the teachers consider some of the following issues: assessment, evaluation, student-centered curriculum, integrated curriculum, and professional goals. Lively discussions take place on questions like: What should be common elements of a student portfolio? and, How do we communicate evaluation results in narrative report form? A simple evaluation form is completed by each team after every meeting.

Benefits

Through "T.E.A.M.S."—Together Everyone Achieves More Success—teachers are able to self-select and focus their own professional development. This professional bonding has guaranteed a more meaningful and rewarding growth process, yielding a wealth of learning opportunities for students.

Dr. Shelly Contreras, Principal
Perley Elementary School
South Bend, IN

Strengthening Collegiality

As a faculty of 60 people located on two campuses 10 miles apart, our teachers felt isolated and lonely at times. We identified collegial relations as an important goal for staff development after reading Carl Glickman's book, *Renewing America's Schools*. The group then went to work to create a more satisfactory situation.

A team planned a 3-day retreat before the school year in which all teachers, aides, secretaries, and administrators took part. Participants took the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory to identify leadership styles and learn how to produce a strong team. We reviewed McCormick and Kahn's proposal

for "barn raising" as a collaborative process. This led to exploring the problem of disagreeing with each other using *The Abilene Paradox* video as a discussion starter. We practiced building trust through "Outward Bound" activities and divided into small groups to share experiences and plan personal goals. We talked, ate, played, and lived together in ways we never find possible in our day-to-day teaching roles.

We continue to meet monthly to do our work while focusing on conflict resolution skills, using journals for reflective thinking, using the Socratic method in discussions, and building stronger teams.

Benefits

After our sessions, we had the immediate outcome of feeling closer to each other and more appreciated as professionals. We became united in a common goal and empowered to make it happen. The bigger payoff, however, has been the increased willingness to risk discussing opposing ideas with candor, sensitivity, and respect. In turn, these new behaviors have spawned an improved environment for students that nurtures self-esteem and cooperative learning.

Beth Passi, Lower School Director
The Blake Lower School
Hopkins and Wayzata, MN

Building Staff Development

Description

At the end of every school year, we survey our teachers and discover educational topics to pursue further. The nine subjects of greatest interest are then scheduled for a series of workshops during the following year. Each session is planned by a different member of the shared-decision-making team,

which consists of teachers, parents, paraprofessionals, and administrators.

We ask two or three teachers to lead one workshop, with individual presentations lasting 10 to 15 minutes. Attendance is voluntary, averaging approximately 85% of our faculty at each before-school meeting. Titles of the sessions have included "Teaching Reading Through Literature," "Using Tradebooks to Teach," "Attention Deficit Disorder," "Marilyn Burns Mathematics," "Writers' Workshop Strategies," "Parent Volunteers in the Classroom," "Flexible Grouping," "Thematic Units," and "Families Experiencing Change." After the workshops, the leaders are recognized in our weekly staff bulletin and by a personal note from the principal.

Benefits

The structure of our staff development program not only addresses teachers' needs, but it also identifies resource people within our school who may be consulted for additional information. This makes possible a noncompetitive form of recognition for those who make contributions in their area of expertise. A great atmosphere of collegiality results that carries over into multiple areas of professional responsibility.

Dr. Paul Casciano, Principal
Moriches Elementary School
Moriches, NY

Improving Quality

Description

In collaboration with the Educational Administration Department at Syracuse University, our staff developed an evaluation instrument to assess program quality. Every 3 years, collected data are tabulated to determine how we might strengthen our school environment.

The instrument is a series of statements believed to be relevant indicators of educational quality. These criteria are organized into 10 categories, sequenced from the broad and encompassing (philosophy and goals) to the more specific (instructional methods and evaluation procedures). The indicators are as follows: 1) philosophy, 2) program goals and design, 3) admission and exit procedures, 4) resources, 5) personnel, 6) staff relationships, 7) student goals, 8) instructional methods and curriculum, 9) parent and community involvement, and 10) evaluation.

Benefits

The value in such a process relates to the collective involvement of all staff members during the entire process, from identification to resolution of problems. During the past 3 years, our staff has developed collegial responses to divergent problem areas such as sexuality education, staff and student handbooks, behavior management, and the design and use of available space. Shared decision making has resulted in a more enthusiastic and competent team able to deliver more effective program and student outcomes.

Jack Breen, Principal
Orchard School/Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial
Yonkers, NY

Staff Person of the Year

Description

Just as teachers honor someone each year, our support staff chooses a "Staff Member of the Year." This person is awarded a select, reserved parking space; a bulletin board with pictures and congratulations; and an inscribed gift. The kudos last all year long.

The criteria staff members use to guide their choice are quite comprehensive. In addition to having excellent per-

formance, the person must be 1) respected by the school community, 2) instrumental in promoting the school philosophy and mission, and 3) a positive role model and inspiration for students.

Benefits

By acknowledging a staff person's special effort, everyone in our school is rewarded. It takes all of us working together to create a quality environment in which children will thrive.

Shirley Henderson, Principal
Joseph Keels Elementary School
Columbia, SC

Learn at Lunch

Description

Once each month, our administration meets with different grade level teachers (one grade at a time) during lunch period. Before the meeting, teachers complete a form with information about the following: 1) positive happenings in the classroom, 2) students who have improved, 3) students who are neat, 4) those you are concerned about, 5) future plans, 6) progress with goals, 7) items of concern, and 8) topics you want to discuss.

Administrators review the sheets and are prepared at the meeting for give and take. During the appointed time, a small group of teachers gathers with staff in the conference room for fun, fellowship, and professional sharing.

Benefits

Because our school has over 1,100 students (at one time over 1,600), we have found the lunch meetings to be most productive. They have helped administrators to bond with teachers as well as become more familiar with students.

We can now easily follow up with students who need help, reinforce those who have excelled, and provide additional support for all learners and educators. Our teachers thoroughly enjoy this collaboration and appreciate the concern we give to issues that affect them daily.

Dr. Julianne C. Robertson, Principal
Oak Elementary School
Bartlett, TN

Monthly Staff Development Breakfast

Description

One Friday morning each month, certificated and classified staff members join in fellowship, learning, and sharing of classroom success related to one of our educational goals for the year. A different team plans a short presentation every month. Over breakfast, we have at various times discussed a chapter of a book we are reading, explored a manipulative math lesson, or listened to a local speaker address community collaboration efforts.

Two weeks later, we meet for 1 hour after school to exchange what we have experienced from implementing at least one idea learned at the meeting. Staff are paid for their attendance at the developmental sessions.

Benefits

We believe such a culture of collegiality, sharing best practices, focused goals, and shared leadership has contributed to our continued success.

Cynthia M. Sicilia, Principal
Custer Elementary School
Custer, WA

Teacher Exchange Day

Description

One day each school year, teachers are encouraged to choose a class to teach at a grade level different from their current assignment. Participating faculty prepare lesson plans for their own classes that their "exchange" colleagues will implement.

Children are not informed of the exchange until they are met on the playground in the morning by their "new" teacher. Together they follow the established daily plan. In addition, there are new duties for faculty on "Teacher Exchange Day."

Whenever possible, teachers are exchanged in a classroom at least 2 years above or below their assigned level. In successive years, different grade levels are explored in order to make the most of the experience.

Benefits

Teacher Exchange Day has been a resounding success with approximately 90% participation since its inception. In follow-up discussions, teachers have indicated that they understand the curriculum somewhat better, see the need for cross-grade collaboration, and sympathize with demands on their colleagues.

The children have responded positively and now know other teachers as more than a friendly face. Parents also support the idea because of their children's enthusiasm as well as their own appreciation of the teachers' broader knowledge.

Jane M. Empey-Theep, Principal
Milwaukee German Immersion School
Milwaukee, WI



Absorbing computerized knowledge.



Making the Best Use of Technology

Just as learning to use a slide rule was important in the 1950s, learning to use a computer is important in the 1990s. *Time* magazine noted that in 1860, only 7% of the jobs in the United States were in information processing and communications. By 1980, 50% of all the jobs in the U.S. were based on information processing.

As one principal noted, "Our students need to be prepared for the jobs of tomorrow, not the jobs of yesterday." Blue Ribbon Schools are striving to meet that goal.

Programs described in this chapter include a special computer lab that helps underachieving students improve their skills and a network that involves the entire school in everything from scheduling to library research. As these examples demonstrate, Blue Ribbon Schools are putting technology to work for students.

Built-In Technology

Description

Technology has become an invaluable motivator as well as an efficient provider of information at our school. With the help of an AB 1470 grant, district foundation funds,

Parent Club support, and library funds, we have equipped a media center with such items as laserdisc players, interactive computers, scanners, VCRs, a camcorder, CD-ROM players, and software programs/databases (including three encyclopedias) such as word processing and painting, desktop publishing, critical thinking games, and multimedia.

Our latest endeavor is the development of a portable computer lab with 10 Macintosh Powerbooks. Small groups make visits to this center where students are scheduled for "Keyboarding," "Word Processing," or "Hyperstudio." Faculty, in coordination with the library media teacher, may also check out equipment for classroom use or to use for work at home.

It is important to note that instruction, developed by our staff and reviewed annually, focuses on research skills—accessing, processing, and presenting information—combined with content area objectives.

Benefits

The most exciting part of our media center is that the technology is not sitting on-a shelf collecting dust! Students and teachers are frequent and skillful users of these wonderful tools.

The portable computer lab has brought interactive learning to all curricular areas through multimedia strategies. Most laserdisc programs, for example, are not planned lessons, and visuals must be thoughtfully incorporated into classroom work. This type of learning tends to encourage cooperative interaction and is highly motivating.

Ken Wulf, Principal
Valley Oak Elementary School
Clovis, CA

Intelligence Network/Collaboration

Description

Step-by-step, our K-5 magnet school is establishing a computer network to complement traditional learning resources. We operate a school-within-a-school concept with one third of our school as an "open" alternative. The entire school serves a unique community that reflects 17 different languages. In the alternative program, parents are required to participate 4 hours a week and are, therefore, deeply involved in their child's education.

Inspired by Jean Piaget's theory that children learn through experimentation and interaction, we focus on multimedia networking stations integrated into each curricular area, especially math and science. This comprehensive, balanced approach allows students to exchange, create, and refine ideas by drawing on their own experience. Educators appreciate the variety of learning strategies at their disposal; they encourage motivated students to manipulate the flow of words, sounds, and images in search of more information.

Benefits

Our collaboration with Hewlett Packard and their "Project Score" has been a key to our success. In the past 2 years, we have received technology (worth more than \$100,000) and volunteers (exceeding 10,000 hours) to assist and train teachers.

With the cooperation of business, family, and community volunteers, we are building an educational team as well as expanding our school plan. The emphasis is toward teaching students to be readers, researchers, scientists and mathematicians, effective communicators, and valuable community members of the 21st century by understanding how to use the multitude of information available to us.

Dr. Joya Chatterjee, Principal
Westwood Elementary School
Santa Clara, CA

Cougar Connection

Description

Many schools use various types of voice mail to communicate with parents. What started out as a tool to help students and parents monitor homework has quickly become a comprehensive information network.

There are several hardware configurations that allow school-based phone lines and computers to connect with commercial services. The best option for us has been a local vendor who delivers this technology to teachers for approximately \$5 per month each. Our Adopt-a-School sponsor has provided funds for the program since its inception.

Operating the "Cougar Connection" is simple. Teachers take 2 or 3 minutes a day to record a brief message about their class. Messages should be more than a list of homework; they usually include a brief description of current activities and what is planned for the next few days. Most teachers also take this opportunity to make special announcements about progress reports, field trips, and class projects. Parents and students have 24-hour access to this information as close as the nearest telephone.

Benefits

Parents are encouraged to call the Cougar Connection before they talk to their child about school. If parents can say something like, "Tell me about your experiment on coastal erosion," they are apt to stimulate meaningful discussion. Middle school students respond much better than if asked, "What did you do at school today?"

Many parents are uncertain how to monitor student progress. Recommending voice mail is an easy-to-use suggestion for parents who appreciate an opportunity to take a peek into their child's day. Because the network is automated, it is also possible to track the number and frequency

of calls, alerting administrators to potential problems. Busy teachers and clerical staff no longer must fill out and collect assignment sheets for absent students who can dial voice mail and be prepared when they return.

Timothy C. Gilbert, Principal
Cope Middle School
Bossier City, LA

The TLC Classroom

Description

"Teaching and Learning with Computers" (TLC) is part of a schoolwide support effort to increase academic achievement of at-risk students. With TLC, teachers integrate technology—electronic tools, software, information—into an active learning environment at the point of instruction.

The flexible design of this program allows students to move in small groups to complete specific tasks at various classroom "stations." The teacher conducts the regular reading or math curriculum with one group while other small groups rotate among the stations in a planned sequence.

Benefits

By working with a variety of thematic activities, students reinforce concepts currently being studied. They learn at their own pace, cooperating to explore and solve problems. The stations accommodate diverse styles of learning and individual needs. As students assume more responsibility within the groups, the teacher is freed to continue with other students as a catalyst in the process.

Frances S. Price, Principal
Northeast Elementary School
Pride, LA

Hub of Learning

Description

In our rural area, many jobs in fishing, farming, and logging have disappeared. Consequently, students need to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow. For us, technology is not just an "add-on"; it is incorporated into the curriculum as a resource for presenting information in an entirely new way.

An integral part of every classroom, the "network" is the backbone of educational instruction. Here, students do library research, publish books, give multimedia presentations, share ideas, and correspond with others.

Every teacher activity—from signing up for a television to scheduling a meeting—is facilitated via this technology. Even our National School of Excellence application was written by the entire staff over the network. Soon every student, teacher, parent, and community member will have a personal mailbox on the Community of Learners Network (CLN).

Benefits

Much more than a "special class," technology has become an integrating force in our educational community. The staff/student projects below speak for themselves to illustrate the encompassing nature of this tool: 1) Hyper-Card stacks for authentic assessment; 2) desktop publishing of big books, journals, posters, and newspapers at all grade levels; 3) GAIA project using satellite images of pollution impact on our region to integrate science, math, and social studies; 4) multimedia presentations after a whale trip to study ecology; 5) collaborative writing with high school students; 6) creating instructional and music videos; and 7) card catalog research from every classroom.

Jack Mara, Principal
Miller School
Waldoboro, ME

STAR Club

Description

Motivating students to read, enjoy, and appreciate good literature is the reason our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) began the "STAR (Students Taking Accelerated Reading) Club." By accessing a special computer program, children read books, answer questions about the book, and earn points to receive rewards for their accomplishments.

Boys and girls who want to join the club make independent choices about which books they will read. The computer prints out performance levels and the percentage of correct answers for students to take home or to class. They also receive a STAR membership card and certificate of participation; the achievement rewards we give out come from PTO and community funds.

Benefits

Our shining STAR readers enjoy getting feedback from the computer on how well they answer questions. Students show improved skills and comprehension. We have found this process develops independence, self-esteem, and pride in achieving success as well as a lifetime love for reading.

Aided by technology, teachers and parents more accurately assess reading skills so they can guide and encourage children to learn at their ideal level. Moreover, students benefit from the school community working together.

David C. Hemingway, Principal
King's Highway Elementary School
Coatesville, PA

Basic Learning System

Description

Our school has implemented the Jostens Basic Learning System with all grades (pre-K through 5th) participating in computer-assisted instruction of basic math and reading skills. We attribute our positive results to the close interaction with and monitoring of student performance during the Jostens sessions.

Students solve problems, advancing at their own pace and level. Teachers, meanwhile, track learning progress and support regular classroom instruction. In addition, they can program Alternative Learning Pathways (ALPS) to teach large or small groups. Whole-group lessons are desirable for introducing new concepts, additional practice, and review. An instructional assistant manages the computer-assisted process so the classroom teacher can focus on content, pacing, and grouping of children.

Benefits

Detailed student reports on specific skill mastery enable teachers to meet individual needs. In addition, learners are motivated by this valuable feedback. When employed as a conferencing tool, student reports provide parents with an easy-to-understand analysis of their child's level of performance, accuracy rate, and work habits.

The benefits of this system are maximized when a properly trained staff commits to utilizing its many options. More advanced pupils are challenged, and others make progress in a nonthreatening, yet motivating way. The total involvement of our computer specialist and faculty interacting with each student during instruction has resulted in our institution being honored as a Jostens model school.

Larry D. Fields, Principal
Rowland Hill Latham Elementary School
Winston-Salem, NC



Running toward the future.



Even More “Best Ideas”

There is no formula for making a school a Blue Ribbon School. When principals of Blue Ribbon Schools are asked to describe outstanding programs, they don't always fit into neat categories.

The programs described in this chapter demonstrate how Blue Ribbon Schools respond to local needs. They include a program that has incorporated dance into the elementary school curriculum, an elementary school exchange program between schools in New York and Moscow, and a recognition program that honors the contributions to education made by members of the support staff.

Write On

Description

For many years, we attended a “Young Author’s Conference” at a nearby university. There wasn’t room for everyone to go, so our media staff proposed an “in-house” event to give experience in visual and literary arts to all our children.

Prior to this 1-day event, each student writes and illustrates his or her own book to be shared with others. Because communication is vital to one’s life, we emphasize activities that help awaken dormant creativity within every student.

The conference is organized in short sessions in which students meet published authors, illustrators, journalists,

poets, editors, cartoonists, and others from the literary field. Among the 25 professionals attending were Laura Seeley, Charles Ghigna, Hilary Milton, Allen Johnson, Jr., and Stephen Hanson. Parents and other community volunteers assisted, directing students and serving as hosts to guests.

Benefits

Our students have improved in writing skills, both in composition and creativity. They appreciate hearing and seeing "real" people who write the books and materials they are reading. The total community has profited by this friendly collaboration, and new bonds are forming among children, educators, business, and the professional world.

Dr. Karen T. DeLano, Principal
Shades Cahaba Elementary School
Homewood, AL

Learning Through Creative Dance

Description

In our efforts to restructure, we have discovered creative dance is an effective instructional strategy in all areas of the curriculum, precipitating new highs in student motivation, citizenship, and cooperation. In collaboration with our city's Music Center and the National Endowment for the Arts, all teachers and students are working with professional dance instructors. Teams are organized into residency groups who take 15 workshops with a dance educator and another 5 with a special guest artist. These professional coaches support teachers in their attempts to increase student learning.

For example, as part of their science unit on weather, students demonstrated their knowledge by producing "The Four Seasons." Each class was responsible for a season, dancing a message of what might happen during this part of the year. They swam, created ice sculptures, stored food for

winter, and grew from a seed to a plant—all in creative movement.

Benefits

In addition to teaching and reinforcing basic content, creative dance helps the staff with students who do not always succeed in traditional paper-and-pencil-type activities. At-risk learners gain a new understanding that translates, through self-esteem and motivation, to other areas of performance.

Probably the most significant change in students is that they begin to work and learn more cooperatively. Those who might struggle to get along on the playground or in collaborative tasks are suddenly able to succeed and have a joyous experience.

Christine Reasin, Principal
Gardenhill Global Studies School
La Mirada, CA

Gifted and Talented Connections

Description

Although it is considered special to be in a gifted and talented program, it is not always fun to carry that label when you are in middle school. Our "Connections Program" is unique in that all special services are delivered in a classroom team setting using a push-in model.

Themes are carried out by the academic subject area teacher who has had training in working with the gifted and has been given time to develop enriching interdisciplinary units. Gifted as well as other students who excel in a particular area are included in the programs. For example, when the team did a thematic enrichment unit based on the Civil War, several other students also joined in. One was an at-risk student who was tops in social studies. She did more homework and

research than she had ever done before for this group of teachers.

Many children come to the gifted/enrichment activities in this way, much to the delight of their parents. Field trips, previously offered only to the gifted, are now available to all levels in particular projects.

Benefits

Our belief is that all students can learn and should be challenged to reach their full potential. The inclusive Connections Program does just this for many boys and girls, with higher achievement as the result.

Attracted by our open attitude, more students are eagerly taking part in Connections. The identified gifted students don't feel so labeled. They are more comfortable receiving services in a team setting than being pulled out to go to an entirely different classroom. Teachers are excited to be included in the programming; they felt left out when they had to send their talented students to a special teacher.

Mary Anne Kermis, Principal
Benjamin Franklin Middle School
Kenmore, NY

To Russia With Love

Description

Our school has been involved in a rewarding hands-on educational experience that integrates social studies, geography, technology, science, and the arts. For several years, we have had an exchange with an elementary school in Moscow. Staff and students from both schools have traveled abroad to live, from 1 to 3 weeks, with host families and attend school and local events. We choose an annual theme like "Environment," "Writing," or "Music," with each school sharing its history and culture related to the topic.

Highlights of the program have been the joint presentation of the musical "Peace Child" and a telecommunications project on "Tall Tales." For the musical, each school worked independently for 6 months planning and rehearsing, then everyone put the pieces together at a performance for our community. The 1 1/2 year media project culminated in a 2-week exchange resulting in a published book of art and folk stories from both countries.

Benefits

This ongoing, one-of-a-kind association has provided a chance for fifth and sixth graders as well as staff to visit Russia for a firsthand experience of history, geography, and cultural diversity. It has positively impacted the entire community, which gets caught up in the excitement of the program year after year.

John J. Maher, Principal
Sacandaga Elementary School
Scotia, NY

Second-Language Learners

Description

In response to a growing number of students who are fluent in basic conversational English yet demonstrate a need for strategies to acquire skills, information, and knowledge related to school success, we initiated a "Language and Study Skills Program" for second-language learners. Twice weekly for an hour before school, students of like grade levels work in small groups. Age-appropriate lessons and projects include a variety of literature activities, role-playing, dramatization, and cooperative learning. These are coordinated with multiple thematic units such as "Flying and Soaring," "Snacks and Nutrition," and "Families."

A committee of teachers plans and implements learning to meet overall program goals. They help children see themselves as participants in their own education and suggest strategies for acquiring new skills. An essential component of the program is outreach to parents composed of teacher-parent telephone contacts, evening dessert socials, and personalized letters in a parent's native language.

Benefits

The acquisition of self-esteem, vocabulary, and knowledge has enabled our second-language learners to participate more fully in class. They have initiated new friendships and shown greater involvement in the mainstream.

Parents have also been drawn into school life, becoming more aware of the importance of the home-school partnership. Surveys to parents and teachers, along with rising academic scores, indicate that the program is a success for all in our school community.

Dr. Leslie Korant, Principal
Saddle Rock Elementary School
Great Neck, NY

Staff Support Team

Description

The basic needs of students have to be met before learning can take place; therefore, we have created a "Staff Support Team" to serve the whole child. The team—that is, teachers, administrators, and community resources such as ministers and a social services representatives—responds to difficulties arising in classrooms.

Students with psychological, emotional, social, academic, behavioral, or environmental concerns are assisted in a timely fashion. Any area of difficulty is brought for discussion to

the Staff Support Team, after which the student concerned is put on the Watch List. Subsequently, at least two classroom observations are made by a member of the team who suggests interventions and schedules several follow-up meetings. If necessary, home visits take place and include recommendations to caregivers about the well-being of the child.

Extreme cases are referred for psycho-educational evaluation, mental health services, or the School Intervention Program. In a biweekly meeting, the team reviews new cases, in addition to monitoring and adjusting interventions for past referrals. By the time school closes, our faculty has made a sound determination whether to retain or promote each student based on this outstanding collaboration.

Benefits

The Staff Support Team benefits the students and their families, as well as the teachers. Students with severe problems have been helped. One student has been placed in a school for the deaf and is making tremendous gains. Another student was observed by her teachers exhibiting abnormal behaviors. As a result of her referral, she was treated for a serious brain condition and is well and functioning normally again. Still another student was diagnosed with a congenital bone disorder, had corrective surgery, and is recovering. Through the Staff Support Team and community efforts, one family who was living in substandard housing is now living in a new mobile home.

The Staff Support Team provides teachers with support and opportunities to collaborate with other professionals about their concerns. The Staff Support Team strives continuously to meet the special needs of Greeleyville Elementary students.

Ralph C. Fennell, Jr., Principal
Greeleyville Elementary School
Greeleyville, SC



Blue ribbon smiles.



1993-1994 Blue Ribbon Elementary and Middle Schools

ALABAMA

EPIC Elementary School
1000 Tenth Avenue, South
Birmingham, AL 35202
(205) 581-5155/5156

Leeds Elementary School
201 Ashville Road
Leeds, AL 35094
(205) 699-6871

Maryvale Elementary School
1901 North Maryvale Street
Mobile, AL 36605
(205) 471-1379

Oak Mountain Elementary School
5640 Cahaba Valley Road
Birmingham, AL 35242
(205) 980-3630

Shades Cahaba Elementary School
3001 Montgomery Highway
Homewood, AL 35209
(205) 871-1113

Tarrant Elementary School
1269 Portland Street
Tarrant, AL 35217
(205) 841-7541

ALASKA

Mendenhall River Community
School
10014 Crazy Horse Drive
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 463-1799

North Star Elementary School
P.O. Box 8629
Nikiski, AK 99635
(907) 776-5575

ARIZONA

Centennial Elementary School
2200 West Wetmore Road
Tucson, AZ 85705
(602) 690-2291

Del Rio Elementary School
P.O. Box 225
Chino Valley, AZ 86323
(602) 636-4414

Manzanita School
3000 East Manzanita Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85718
(602) 577-5320

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Saint Mary-Basha Catholic
Elementary School
200 West Galveston
Chandler, AZ 85224
(602) 963-4951

Shumway Elementary School
1325 North Shumway Avenue
Chandler, AZ 85225
(602) 786-7120

ARKANSAS

Parson Hills Elementary School
2326 Cardinal Drive
Springdale, AR 72764
(501) 750-8877

CALIFORNIA

Argonaut Elementary School
13200 Shadow Mountain Drive
Saratoga, CA 95070
(408) 867-4773

Bryant Ranch School
24695 Paseo de Toronto
Yorba Linda, CA 92687
(714) 692-8275

Country Club Elementary School
7534 Blue Fox Way
San Ramon, CA 94583
(510) 828-7284

Cuddeback Union Elementary
School
P.O. Box 7
Carlotta, CA 95528
(707) 768-3372

Dry Creek Elementary School
8098 North Armstrong
Clovis, CA 93611
(209) 299-2161

Fred L. Newhart School
25001 Oso Viejo
Mission Viejo, CA 92692
(714) 855-0162

Gardenhill Elementary School
14620 Gardenhill Drive
La Mirada, CA 90638
(310) 944-6128

Grover Heights Elementary School
770 North 8th Street
Grover Beach, CA 93433
(805) 473-4120

Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy
9120 West Olympic Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
(310) 276-6135

J. Haley Durham Elementary
School
40292 Leslie Street
Fremont, CA 94538
(510) 657-7080

Lakewood Elementary School
2920 Middleboro Place
Modesto, CA 95355
(209) 576-4841

Meadows Elementary School
25577 North Fedala Road
Valencia, CA 91355
(805) 255-8450

Morning Creek Elementary School
10925 Morning Creek Drive South
San Diego, CA 92128
(619) 748-4334

Mountain View Elementary School
2002 East Alluvial
Fresno, CA 93720-0100
(209) 298-9781

Newhall Elementary School
24607 North Walnut Street
Newhall, CA 91321
(805) 259-8480

Norwood Creek Elementary School
Remington Way
San Jose, CA 95148
(408) 270-6726

Pacific Union Elementary School
3001 Janes Road
Arcata, CA 95521
(707) 822-4619

Pliocene Ridge Elementary School
1999 Ridge Road
North San Juan, CA 95960
(916) 288-3247

Red Bank Elementary School
1454 Locan
Clovis, CA 93611
(209) 299-4135

Rosedale North Elementary School
11500 Meacham Road
Bakersfield, CA 93312
(805) 588-6040

St. Isidore School
435 La Gonda Way
Danville, CA 94526
(510) 837-2977

St. James' Episcopal School
625 South St. Andrew's Place
Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 382-2315

St. Joseph Elementary School
San Antonio Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
(510) 522-4457

Sequoia Elementary School
5305 Dupont Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95409
(707) 539-3410

Valley Oak Elementary School
465 East Champlain Drive
Fresno, CA 93720
(209) 434-5018

Van Buren Elementary School
9501 Jurupa Road
Riverside, CA 92509
(909) 360-2865

West Hillsborough School
376 Barbara Way
Hillsborough, CA 94010
(415) 344-9870

Westwood Elementary School
435 Saratoga Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050
(408) 983-2154

White Oak Elementary School
31761 West Village School Road
Westlake Village, CA 91361
(818) 889-1450

Woodside School
3195 Woodside Road
Woodside, CA 94062
(415) 851-1571

COLORADO

South Elementary School
1100 South Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104
(303) 688-4102

Westridge Elementary School
10785 West Alamo Place
Littleton, CO 80127
(303) 978-0100

CONNECTICUT

Anna M. Reynolds School
85 Reservoir Road
Newington, CT 06111
(203) 521-7830

Flanders Elementary School
Boston Post Road
East Lyme, CT 06333
(203) 739-8475

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Mitchell Elementary School
1400 School Street
Woodbury, CT 06798
(203) 263-4314

New Canaan Country School
P.O. Box 997
New Canaan, CT 06840
(203) 972-0771

Noah Wallace School
2 School Street
Farmington, CT 06032
(203) 677-1659

The Rectory School, Inc.
528 Pomfret Street
Pomfret, CT 06258
(203) 928-7759

Roger Sherman School
64 North Pearl Street
Meriden, CT 06450
(203) 238-1286

Stratfield School
1407 Melville Avenue
Fairfield, CT 06430
(203) 255-8332

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Horace Mann Elementary School
45th and Newark Streets, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016
(202) 282-0126

FLORIDA

Academy of the Holy Names
3319 Bayshore Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33629
(813) 839-5371

Alimacani Elementary School
2051 SanPablo Road
Jacksonville, FL 32224
(904) 221-7101

Coral Gables Elementary School
105 Minorca Avenue
Coral Gables, FL 33134
(305) 448-1731

Hawkes Bluff Elementary School
5900 Southwest 160th Avenue
Davie, FL 33331
(305) 680-1177

Hyde Grove Elementary School
2056 Lane Avenue, South
Jacksonville, FL 32210
(904) 693-7562

Interlachen Elementary School
Route 2 Box 376
Interlachen, FL 32148
(904) 684-3562

Nova Blanche Forman
Elementary School
3521 Southwest Davie Road
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314
(305) 370-1788

Ormond Beach Elementary School
100 Corbin Avenue
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
(904) 677-3611

Rodney B. Cox Elementary School
201 West Martin Luther King
Boulevard
Dade City, FL 33525
(904) 567-5360

St. David Catholic School
3900 South University Drive
Davie, FL 33328
(305) 472-7086

St. Joseph Catholic School
5320 Babcock Street, NE
Palm Bay, FL 32905
(407) 723-8866

St. Rose of Lima School
10690 Northeast 5th Avenue
Miami Shores, FL 33138
(305) 751-4257

Windy Ridge Elementary School
3900 Beech Tree Drive
Orlando, FL 32835
(407) 296-5100

GEORGIA

County Line Elementary School
905 Mulberry Road
Winder, GA 30680
(404) 867-2902

Eastvalley Elementary School
2570 Lower Roswell Road
Marietta, GA 30067
(404) 509-6039

Elm Street School
46 Elm Street
Newnan, GA 30263
(404) 254-2865

George L. Edwards Middle School
2633 Stanton Road
Conyers, GA 30208
(404) 483-3255

St. John Neumann Regional
Catholic School
801 Tom Smith Road
Lilburn, GA 30247
(404) 381-0557

St. John the Evangelist Catholic
School
240 Arnold Street
Hapeville, GA 30354
(404) 767-4312

William Milton Davis Elementary
School
2433 Jamerson Road
Marietta, GA 30066
(404) 591-6807

HAWAII

Linapuni School
1434 Linapuni Street
Honolulu, HI 96819
(808) 845-1825

Pearl Ridge Elementary School
98-940 Moanalua Road
Aiea, HI 96701
(808) 488-3922

Waihe'e School
RR1, Box 122
Wailuku, HI 96793
(808) 244-5674

IDAHO

Lowell Elementary School
1507 North 28th Street
Boise, ID 83703
(208) 338-3478

Morningside Elementary School
701 Morningside Drive
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 733-6507

ILLINOIS

Arnett C. Lines School
217 John Snow Avenue
Barrington, IL 60010
(708) 381-7850

Booth Tarkington School
310 South Scott Street
Wheeling, IL 60090
(708) 520-2775

Butterfield School
1441 West Lake Street
Libertyville, IL 60048
(708) 362-3120

Crete-Monee Middle School
1500 Sangamon Street
Crete, IL 60417
(708) 672-2700

132 Best Ideas From Blue Ribbon Schools

Frankfort Junior High School
22265 South 80th Avenue
Frankfort, IL 60423
(815) 469-4474

Haines School
155 West Haines Avenue
New Lenox, IL 60451
(815) 485-2115

Lake Forest Country Day School
145 South Green Bay Road
Lake Forest, IL 60045
(708) 234-2350

INDIANA

Amy Beverland Elementary
School
11650 Fox Road
Indianapolis, IN 46236
(317) 823-5228

Hebrew Academy of Indianapolis
6602 Hoover Road
Indianapolis, IN 46260
(317) 251-1261

Perley Elementary School
740 North Eddy Street
South Bend, IN 46617
(219) 234-2722

St. Lawrence School
6950 East 46th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46226
(317) 543-4923

IOWA

Alden Community Elementary
School
Center Street, Box 48
Alden, IA 50006
(515) 859-3394

Garfield Elementary School
East 29th Street
Davenport, IA 52803
(319) 322-1922

Pella Christian Grade School
216 Liberty
Pella, IA 50219-1763
(515) 628-2414

KANSAS

Belinder Elementary School
7230 Belinder Road
Shawnee Mission, KS 66208
(913) 789-3650

Cherokee Elementary School
8714 Antioch
Shawnee Mission, KS 66212
(913) 967-7990

Christa McAuliffe Elementary
School
15600 West 83rd Street
Lenexa, KS 66219
(913) 752-2840

Overland Trail Elementary School
6225 West 133rd Street
Overland Park, KS 66209
(913) 681-4475

Ridgeview Elementary School
1201 East Elm
Olathe, KS 66061
(913) 780-7630

Roseland Elementary School
4900 Parish
Shawnee Mission, KS 66205
(913) 789-3480

Tomahawk Elementary School
13820 Brougham Drive
Olathe, KS 66062
(913) 780-7690

KENTUCKY

Blessed Sacrament School
2407 Dixie Highway
Fort Mitchell, KY 41017
(606) 331-3062

Crestwood Elementary School
6500 West Highway 146
Crestwood, KY 40014
(502) 241-8401

Stanton Elementary School
651 Breckinridge Street
P.O. Box 367
Stanton, KY 40380
(606) 663-3311

LOUISIANA

Christ the King School
1000 Ogilvie Street
Bossier City, LA 71111
(318) 222-8934

Cope Middle School
4814 Shed Road
Bossier City, LA 71111
(318) 742-1730

Northeast Elementary School
16477 Pride-Port Hudson Road
P.O. Box 70
Pride, LA 70770
(504) 654-5113

Our Lady of Divine Providence
School
917 North Atlanta Street
Metairie, LA 70003
(504) 466-0591

St. Christopher School
3900 Derbigny Street
Metairie, LA 70001
(504) 837-6871

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini School
1500 Prentiss Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70122
(504) 288-4249

Woodlake Elementary School
1620 Livingston Street
Mandeville, LA 70448
(504) 626-8842

MAINE

Acton Elementary School
HCR #1, Box 528
East Lebanon, ME 04027
(207) 636-2100

Miller School
P.O. Box C, Route 32
Waldoboro, ME 04572
(207) 832-2103

MARYLAND

Burtonsville Elementary School
15516 Old Columbia Pike
Burtonsville, MD 20866
(301) 989-5654

Chevy Chase Elementary School
4015 Rosemary Street
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(301) 657-4994

Ivymount School
11614 Seven Locks Road
Rockville, MD 20854
(301) 469-0223

Riderwood Elementary School
1711 Landrake Road
Towson, MD 21204
(410) 887-3568

St. Catherine Laboure School
11811 Claridge Road
Wheaton, MD 20902
(301) 946-1717

134 Best Ideas From Blue Ribbon Schools

Washington Episcopal School
5161 River Road
Bethesda, MD 20816
(301) 652-7878

Yellow Springs Elementary School
8717 Yellow Springs Road
Frederick, MD 21702
(301) 694-1475

MASSACHUSETTS

Snug Harbor Community School
333 Palmer Street
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 984-8763

MICHIGAN

Four Towns Elementary School
6370 Cooley Lake Road
Waterford, MI 48327
(313) 582-0621

Fox Elementary School
17500 Millstone
Macomb, MI 48044
(313) 228-5630

Golightly Educational Center of
Liberal Arts and Sciences
5536 St. Antoine
Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 494-2538

Highmeadow Common Campus
30175 Highmeadow
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(313) 489-3699

L'Anse Creuse Middle School
Central
38000 Reimold
Harrison Township, MI
48045-5501
(313) 469-8818

St. Clare of Montefalco Catholic
School
16231 Charlevoix Avenue
Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230
(313) 886-1440

St. Joan of Arc School
22415 Overlake Drive
St. Clair Shores, MI 48080
(313) 775-8370

Waukazoo Elementary School
1294 West Lakewood Boulevard
Holland, MI 49424
(616) 786-1800

MINNESOTA

Blake Lower School
301 Peavey Lane
Wayzata, MN 55391
(612) 473-1700

Cedar Manor Intermediate Center
9400 Cedar Lake Road
St. Louis Park, MN 55426-2399
(612) 928-6555

Creek Valley Elementary School
6401 Gleason Road
Edina, MN 55439
(612) 941-1655

Greenvale Park Elementary School
700 Lincoln Parkway
Northfield, MN 55057
(507) 645-3500

H.O. Sonnesyn Elementary School
3421 Boone Avenue, North
New Hope, MN 55427
(612) 544-1579

Oak Grove Intermediate School
1300 West 106th Street
Bloomington, MN 55431
(612) 885-7301

MISSISSIPPI

Sudduth Elementary School
Greenfield Drive
Starkville, MS 39759
(601) 324-4150

MISSOURI

Ballwin Elementary School
400 Jefferson
Ballwin, MO 63021
(314) 227-4104

Bryan Elementary School
400 West Lee
Nevada, MO 64772
(417) 448-2060

Cler-Mont Community School
19009 Sesquehanna Ridge
Independence, MO 64056
(816) 796-8434

Pershing School
6761 Bartmer
University City, MO 63130
(314) 725-2344

Pond Elementary School
17200 Manchester Road
Grover, MO 63040
(314) 458-2991

Russell Elementary School
7350 Howdershell
Hazelwood, MO 63042
(314) 839-9585

Thorpe J. Gordon Elementary
School
1101 Jackson Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101
(314) 659-3170

Wilkinson Early Childhood Center
7212 Arsenal
St. Louis, MO 63143
(314) 645-1202

William Southern Elementary
School
4300 Phelps
Independence, MO 64055
(816) 373-0420

William Volker Applied Learning
Magnet School
3715 Wyoming
KS City, MO 64111
(816) 871-6200

MONTANA

Chief Joseph Middle School
309 North 11th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 585-1613

NEVADA

McGill Elementary School
#25 Avenue F
P.O. Box 1296
McGill, NV 89318
(702) 235-7722

NEW JERSEY

CPC Behavioral Healthcare
High Point Elementary School
1 High Point Center Way
Morganville, NJ 07751
(908) 591-1750 X149

Maurice Hawk School
Clarksville Road
P.O. Box 248
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550
(609) 799-0203

Our Lady Star of the Sea School
520 Lafayette Street
Cape May, NJ 08204
(609) 884-4437

136 Best Ideas From Blue Ribbon Schools

Upper Freehold Regional
Elementary School
27 High Street
Allentown, NJ 08501
(609) 259-7369

Watchung School
14 Garden Street
Montclair, NJ 07042
(201) 509-4259

NEW MEXICO

Barcelona Elementary School
2311 Barcelona Road, SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
(505) 877-0400

Governor Bent Elementary School
5700 Hendrix Road, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
(505) 880-3951

NEW YORK

Astor Home for Children
P.O. Box 5005, 36 Mill Street
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
(914) 876-4081

Benjamin Franklin Elementary
School
262 Conklin Avenue
Binghamton, NY 13903
(607) 762-8340

Benjamin Franklin Middle School
540 Parkhurst Boulevard
Kenmore, NY 14223
(716) 874-8404

Daniel Webster Magnet School
95 Glenmore Drive
New Rochelle, NY 10801
(914) 576-4460

H.J. Kalfas Early Childhood
Magnet School
1800 Beech Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14305
(716) 284-3346

Horizons-on-the-Hudson Magnet
School
137 Montgomery Street
Newburgh, NY 12550
(914) 563-7373

Louis M. Klein Middle School
50 Union Avenue
Harrison, NY 10528
(914) 835-3300 x211

Mandalay School
2667 Bayview Avenue
Wantagh, NY 11793
(516) 783-9515

Milton School
Hewlett Avenue
Rye, NY 10580
(914) 967-6100 X295

Moriches Elementary School
Montauk Highway
Moriches, NY 11955
(516) 281-3020

Orchard School/Julia Dyckman
Andrus Memorial
1156 North Broadway
Yonkers, NY 10701
(914) 965-8786

Our Lady of the Hamptons
Regional Catholic School
160 North Main Street
Southampton, NY 11968
(516) 283-9140

Poestenkill Elementary School
One School Road
Poestenkill, NY 12140
(518) 283-5115

Sacandaga Elementary School
Schermerhorn Street
Scotia, NY 12302
(518) 382-1282

Sacred Heart/Mt. Carmel School
for the Arts
71 Sharpe Boulevard, South
Mount Vernon, NY 10550
(914) 667-1734

Saddle Rock Elementary School
10 Hawthorne Lane
Great Neck, NY 11023
(516) 773-1500

Saint Joseph School
28-46 44th Street
Long Island City, NY 11103
(718) 728-0724

Theodore Roosevelt Elementary
School
283 Washington Avenue
Kenmore, NY 14217
(716) 874-8409

Thomas Edison Elementary School
236 Grayton Road
Tonawanda, NY 14150
(716) 874-8416

Yeshiva of Central Queens
147-37 70th Road
Flushing, NY 11367
(718) 793-8500

NORTH CAROLINA

Rowland Hill Latham Elementary
School
986 Hutton Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27101
(910) 727-2310

OHIO

Columbus School for Girls
56 S. Columbia Avenue
Bexley, OH 43209
(614) 252-0781

Immaculate Conception School
366 East North Broadway
Columbus, OH 43214
(614) 267-6579

Independence Primary School
7600 Hillside Road
Independence, OH 44131
(216) 642-5870

J. F. Burns Elementary School
8471 Columbia Road
Kings Mills, OH 45034
(513) 683-2820

Kirtland Middle School
9152 Chillicothe Road
Kirtland, OH 44094
(216) 256-3358

Metro Catholic Parish School
1910 West 54th Street
Cleveland, OH 44102
(216) 281-4044

Orchard Elementary School
4200 Bailey Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44113
(216) 631-1854

Pepper Pike Elementary School
32000 Chagrin Boulevard
Pepper Pike, OH 44124-5974
(216) 831-8600 X530

St. Joseph Montessori School
933 Hamlet Street
Columbus, OH 43201-3595
(614) 294-8601

138 Best Ideas From Blue Ribbon Schools

St. Jude Elementary School
594 Poplar Street
Elyria, OH 44035
(216) 366-1681

St. Mary School
2845 Erie Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45208
(513) 321-0703

St. Patrick of Heatherdowns
School
4201 Heatherdowns Boulevard
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 381-1775

St. Therese of the Little Flower
School
5555 Little Flower Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45239
(513) 542-6787

St. Thomas More School
4180 North Amber Drive
Brooklyn, OH 44144
(216) 749-1660

Springdale Elementary School
350 West Kemper Road
Cincinnati, OH 45246
(513) 671-6676

Stewart Elementary School
11850 Conrey Road
Cincinnati, OH 45249
(513) 489-7133

Symmes Elementary School
11820 Enyart Road
Loveland, OH 45140
(513) 677-8330

Western Row Elementary School
755 Western Row Road
Mason, OH 45040
(513) 398-5061

Whitewater Valley Elementary
School
10800 Campbell Road
Harrison, OH 45030
(513) 367-5577

OKLAHOMA

Cimarron Middle School
3701 South Bryant
Edmond, OK 73013
(405) 340-2935

Hugh Bish Elementary School
5611 Allan-A-Dale
Lawton, OK 73505
(405) 248-2244

Monte Cassino School
2206 South Lewis
Tulsa, OK 74114-3109
(918) 742-3364

PENNSYLVANIA

Bywood Elementary School
330 Avon Road
Upper Darby, PA 19082
(215) 352-6842

Carl Benner School
545 East Lincoln Highway
Coatesville, PA 19320
(215) 383-3755

Carson Middle School
200 Hillvue Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
(412) 369-5520

Crooked Billet Elementary School
Meadowbrook Avenue
Hatboro, PA 19040
(215) 675-0427

East Coventry Elementary School
932 Sanatoga Road
Pottstown, PA 19464
(215) 495-7197

Harvey C. Sabold Elementary School

East Thomson Avenue
Springfield, PA 19064
(215) 544-7080

Kerr Elementary School

341 Kittanning Pike
Pittsburgh, PA 15215
(412) 781-4105

King's Highway Elementary School

R.D. 6, Box 263
Coatesville, PA 19320
(215) 383-3775

Marlborough Elementary School

1450 Gravel Pike
Green Lane, PA 18054
(215) 234-4387

Osborne Elementary School

1414 Beaver Road
Sewickley, PA 15143
(412) 741-9386

Perkiomen Valley South Elementary School

200 East Third Avenue
Collegeville, PA 19426
(215) 489-2991

Salford Hills Elementary School

2720 Barndt Road
Harleysville, PA 19438
(215) 287-9197

RHODE ISLAND

St. Luke School

Waldron Avenue
Barrington, RI 02806
(401) 246-0990

St. Rocco School

931 Atwood Avenue
Johnston, RI 02919
(401) 944-2993

SOUTH CAROLINA

Augusta Circle Elementary School

100 Winyah Street
Greenville, SC 29605
(803) 241-3515

Dutch Fork Elementary School

7900 Broad River Road
Irmo, SC 29063
(803) 732-8075

Greeleyville Elementary School

P.O. Box 128
Greeleyville, SC 29056
(803) 426-2116

Harbor View Elementary School

1576 Harbor View Road
Charleston, SC 29412
(803) 762-2749

Joseph Keels Elementary School

7500 Springcrest Drive
Columbia, SC 29223
(803) 736-8754

L.W. Conder Elementary School

8040 Hunt Club Road
Columbia, SC 29223
(803) 736-8720

Lake City Primary School

125 South Blanding Street
Lake City, SC 29560
(803) 394-2353

Mitchell Elementary School

2 Perry Street
Charleston, SC 29403
(803) 724-7262

Oakbrook Elementary School

4700 Old Fort Road
Ladson, SC 29485
(803) 821-1165

140 Best Ideas From Blue Ribbon Schools

Orange Grove Elementary School
1225 Orange Branch Road
Charleston, SC 29407
(803) 763-1520

Summerville Elementary School
835 South Main Street
Summerville, SC 29483
(803) 873-2372

SOUTH DAKOTA

Dell Rapids Elementary School
7th and State Street
Dell Rapids, SD 57022
(605) 428-3192

TENNESSEE

Big Ridge Elementary School
5210 Cassandra Smith Road
Chattanooga, TN 37343
(615) 842-8200

Oak Elementary School
3573 Oak Road
Bartlett, TN 38135
(901) 373-2646

Richland Elementary School
5440 Rich Road
Memphis, TN 38120
(901) 684-2150

TEXAS

Brentfield Elementary School
6767 Brentfield Drive
Dallas, TX 75248
(214) 407-5740

Carroll Elementary School
1705 West Continental Boulevard
Southlake, TX 76092
(817) 481-8899

Christ the King Catholic School
4100 Colgate Drive
Dallas, TX 75225
(214) 368-7371

Daniel F. Ortega Elementary
School
1135 Garland Avenue
Austin, TX 78721
(512) 926-4112

Davis Elementary School
2701 Parkhaven Drive
Plano, TX 75075
(214) 867-0010

E. B. Reyna Elementary School
Drawer J
La Joya, TX 78560
(210) 580-5975

E. L. Kent Elementary School
1800 West Rosemeade Parkway
Carrollton, TX 75007
(214) 323-6464

Fiest Elementary School
8425 Pine Falls Drive
Houston, TX 77095
(713) 463-5838

Florence Elementary School
3095 Johnson Road
Southlake, TX 76092
(817) 431-1555 X327

Flower Mound Elementary School
4101 Churchill Drive
Flower Mound, TX 75028
(214) 539-8997

Forman Elementary School
3600 Timberline Drive
Plano, TX 75074
(214) 423-7550

Fort Sam Houston Elementary School

3370 Nursery Road
San Antonio, TX 78234-1499
(210) 224-2181

Hazel S. Pattison Elementary School

19910 Stonelodge
Katy, TX 77450
(713) 578-2086

Hedgcoxe Elementary School

7701 Prescott Drive
Plano, TX 75025
(214) 517-1553

Highland Village Elementary School

301 Brazos
Lewisville, TX 75067
(214) 436-7596

Hill Elementary School

8601 Tallwood Drive
Austin, TX 78759
(512) 345-2213

Hunters Creek Elementary School

10650 Beinhorn
Houston, TX 77024
(713) 465-1572

Jack D. Johnson Elementary School

1301 North Carroll Avenue
Southlake, TX 76092
(817) 481-2184

The Lamplighter School

11611 Inwood Road
Dallas, TX 75229
(214) 369-9201

Las Colinas Elementary School

2200 Kinwest Parkway
Irving, TX 75063
(214) 869-3996

Moss Haven Elementary School

9202 Moss Farm Lane
Dallas, TX 75243
(214) 503-2430

North Oaks Elementary School

11104 Oak View Drive
Austin, TX 78759
(512) 258-2282

The Parish Day School

14115 Hillcrest Road
Dallas, TX 75240
(214) 239-8011

Sacred Heart School

P.O. Drawer 588
Muenster, TX 76252
(817) 759-2511 X30

St. Thomas More Parish School

5927 Wigton
Houston, TX 77096-4797
(713) 729-3434

UTAH

Northwest Middle School

1400 Goodwin Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84116
(801) 578-8547

VERMONT

Waitsfield Elementary School

RD 1, Box 260
Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-3643

VIRGINIA

Linkhorne Elementary School

2501 Linkhorne Drive
Lynchburg, VA 24503-3398
(804) 384-6611

142 Best Ideas From Blue Ribbon Schools

Norfolk Academy
1585 Wesleyan Drive
Norfolk, VA 23502
(804) 461-2071

Poquoson Primary School
19 Odd Road
Poquoson, VA 23662
(804) 868-4403

WASHINGTON

Custer Elementary School
7660 Custer School Road
Custer, WA 98240
(206) 384-9278

McAlder Elementary School
15502 96th Street, East
Puyallup, WA 98372
(206) 845-6016

Washington Elementary School
20 E Street, NE
Auburn, WA 98002
(206) 931-4988

Washington Elementary School
1020 McLean Road
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
(206) 428-6122

WEST VIRGINIA

Buckhannon-Upshur Middle
School
P.O. Box 250
Buckhannon, WV 26201
(304) 472-1547

Clay Elementary School
P.O. Box 600
168 Church Street
Clay, WV 25043
(304) 587-4276

Lewisburg Elementary School
206 North Lee Street
Lewisburg, WV 24901
(304) 647-6477

Lory-Julian Elementary School
50 Learning Lane
Julian, WV 25529
(304) 369-1012

St. Francis Central Catholic School
375 Birch Street
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 598-0133

Troy Elementary School
General Delivery
Troy, WV 26443
(304) 462-8655

West Milford Elementary School
226 School Street
West Milford, WV 26451
(304) 745-3341

WISCONSIN

Bay View Middle School
2700 Lineville Road
Green Bay, WI 54313
(414) 434-4010

Magee Elementary School
P.O. Box 37, W313S4134
Highway 83
Genesee Depot, WI 53183
(414) 968-6450

Milwaukee German Immersion
School
3778 North 82nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53222-2999
(414) 464-2500

St. Alphonsus School
6000 West Loomis Road
Greendale, WI 53129
(414) 421-1760

Seymour Middle School
10 Circle Drive
Seymour, WI 54165
(414) 833-7199

WYOMING

Wilson Elementary School
5675 West Main Street
P.O. Box 729
Wilson, WY 83014
(307) 733-3077

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

St. Stephens Indian School
Box 345
128 Mission Road
St. Stephens, WY 82524
(307) 856-4147

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEPENDENTS' SCHOOLS

Sollars Elementary School
Unit 5041
APO AP Honshu, Japan
96319-5041
(011) 811-7652 3933

Please feel free to use this list to network with these Blue Ribbon Schools. For more information on the Blue Ribbon Schools Program for elementary, middle, and secondary schools, please contact the following:

Blue Ribbon Schools Program
Office of Educational Research
and Improvement (OERI)
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20208-5645
(202) 219-2149

or for elementary and middle schools only:

National Association of
Elementary School Principals
Special Projects Division
1615 Duke St.
Alexandria, VA 22314-3483
(703) 684-3345

Best Ideas From America's Blue Ribbon Schools, Volume 2

What Award-Winning Elementary and Middle School Principals Do

"Every one of these programs can be an example to the rest of the nation. Having seen some of the exciting learning opportunities in these schools, I am confident that we are well on our way to a future that brings even greater opportunities for young people to expand their learning horizons and to increase their future potential. Please use our exciting initiatives and these 'best ideas' to strengthen your school."

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

The 1993-1994 Blue Ribbon School winners share their insights and suggestions here in Volume 2 of this popular book.

You get award-winning tips and advice on these education topics:

- Increasing Student Achievement
- Fostering Citizenship and Character
- Creating Safe and Disciplined Schools
- Encouraging Lifelong Learning
- Involving Parents
- Marketing Your School
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And more!

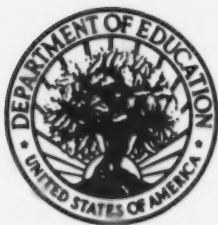
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Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
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